

# **Bridgend County Borough Council**

## **Draft Residential Services**

### **Review Report**

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**21<sup>st</sup> August 2009**  
***(Version 8)***

# RESIDENTIAL REVIEW

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# 1 INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

At the time of the Creative Exchanges Report 'Bridgend Children Deserve the Best' 2007, Bridgend had the second highest rate of looked after children in Wales and the numbers of children looked after were continuing to rise. This was a similar pattern across Wales though the rate nationally was beginning to slow down. Bridgend's looked after figures at this point reached a peak of 293. The report outlined the need for a review of Bridgend's residential provision and the needs of children in residential care. It was also recommended that consideration should be given to realigning services and budgets to reinvest resources in order to increase family support services as part of the prevention and early intervention agenda.

In line with the recommendations of the above report and with corporate support the Supporting Vulnerable Children Programme was implemented in 2007. This comprised a number of projects focussing on reducing the looked after population and ways in which outcomes for children could be improved. At the same time, the implementation of the Threshold of Care Panel began to have an impact on the numbers of children needing to be looked after. This ensured robust care planning was in place and that social workers were intervening at earlier stages and engaging preventative services to work with families to enable children to remain at home if this was appropriate.

The Looked After Children Project aimed to reduce the numbers of children looked after and reduce the use of Independent Fostering Agencies (IFAs). A focus was given to achieving improved permanence planning by increasing: the numbers of children who were placed for adoption, adoption orders and the numbers of adopters approved who could provide permanence for Bridgend children. Alongside this, there was also a focus on achieving permanence through the use of Residence Orders (RO), Special Guardianship Orders (SGO) and revocation of care orders where appropriate. In addition, there was investment in the fostering service both in staffing and financial resources with the aim of increasing the numbers of local foster carers and improving the support to foster carers with a view to returning children where appropriate from IFAs. This project has had success in reducing the numbers of children looked after from 293 at its peak in 2007, to 259 by the end of March 2009. Its success has been mainly through the work of the Adoption Team in increasing the number of children being made subject of adoption orders where targets set have been met or exceeded. There has been less success in the revocation of care orders and use of ROs and SGOs. The fostering service has had success in recruiting new carers through the investment provided, however this has not been as high as anticipated due to the number of foster carers retiring. As a result, there has not been the desired impact on the numbers of children placed in IFAs, and the numbers remain in the mid 70's at the time of undertaking the Review.

Bridgend has three in-house residential homes offering 14 places for children and young people between the ages of 11 and 17 years. This includes 2 emergency beds and there is the potential to make a special placement in the

flat adjoining one of the units to support a young person into independent living. These units are now working largely to their Statement of Purpose and 72 hour planning meetings, are properly held for emergency admissions, although suitable move-on is still proving difficult to achieve. Bridgend also makes use of externally purchased residential placements and, as at 30 June 2009, there were 16 children in external residential placements at a projected full year cost to the Safeguarding & Family Support Service for 2009/10 of £1,315,586. This is net after contributions from Education and Health budgets.

The Residential Review Project was initiated in September 2008, commissioned as part of the Supporting Vulnerable Children corporate programme. The brief of the project was:-

**‘To examine the provision of residential services within Bridgend’s Community Homes to identify whether a redesigned service can improve the outcomes of children and young people who become looked after’**

This report contains the findings, recommendations and conclusions of the Residential Review Project Team.

## 2 PROJECT REVIEW TEAM

The project review team comprised:

Val Jones	Principal Officer, Accommodation and Regulated Services
Mark Lewis	Principal Assistant; Performance and Planning
Karl Culpeck	Residential Manager, Maesteg
Maggie Melean	Residential Manager, Cartrefle
Jan Miller	Residential Worker, Pant Morfa
Steve Driscoll	Team Manager, After Care Service
Bev Harrison-James	Team Manager, Family Support Services
Diana Nyomtato	Team Manager Fostering Service
Nigel Smith	Finance Officer
Christine O'Brian	Principal Assistant; Placement Co-ordination and Commissioning
Helen Johnson	Tros Gynnal
Lianne Miller	Tros Gynnal
Carole Sinnett	Independent Social Worker

The project team was led by Val Jones who undertook the co-ordination of the review work alongside Mark Lewis, who was the link with external agencies and individuals commissioned to undertake the consultation with young people, parents/carers and stakeholders and the care pathway analysis.

Karl Culpeck undertook an analysis of staff profiles, admission/discharge data and occupancy data within the three Community Homes during the period considered for the purpose of this report.

Maggie Melean and Jan Miller undertook an evaluation of Inspection Reports, Annual Reports and End of Placement Reports.

Steve Driscoll, Bev Harrison-James, Christine O'Brian, Diana Nyomtato and Nigel Smith facilitated the consultation with residential staff and produced findings from the consultation.

Bev Harrison-James undertook the analysis of research on models of practice and issues relating to residential provision.

Nigel Smith undertook a cost analysis on the provision of residential care and provided an initial cost outline for future model options.

Helen Johnson and Lianne Miller conducted the consultation interviews with a sample group of young people and their parents/carers who had experienced residential care, evaluated questionnaires completed by stakeholders and produced the findings and summary report from the consultation exercise.

Carole Sinnet was commissioned to undertake a case file analysis of a sample group of young people who have experienced residential care both in house and through external provision.

### **3 REVIEW METHODOLOGY**

The methods employed for this review included: a review of key documents and data: interviews and discussions with young people and their parents/ carers, evaluation of questionnaires completed by social work staff, managers and other professionals in partner agencies, and consultation with residential staff. Discussions with the project team members through the regular project meetings also contributed to this work.

#### **Key documents and data:**

- Statement of Purpose for each home
- Inspection reports for the service for the period identified for the purpose of this review 2006- 2008
- Annual reports for each home for 2006, 2007, 2008
- Sample group of young people's case files
- End of placement reports
- Admission/discharge data
- Occupancy data
- Financial costings

#### **Interviews and Discussions:**

- Residential Staff Consultation Workshop
- Direct interviews/discussions with young people in the three homes
- Direct interviews/discussions with a representative sample group of young people who had left in house residential provision and were living elsewhere
- Telephone interviews/discussions with parents/carers of young people

#### **Questionnaires:**

- Social work staff and managers
- Professionals from Health, Education, Police, Youth Offending Service, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service

## **4 REVIEW FINDINGS**

### **4.1 Themes from External Inspection Reports**

The Care & Social Services Inspectorate for Wales (CSSIW) inspect the three residential homes on an annual basis (Annexe 1). The evaluation of the inspection reports for 2006, 2007 and 2008 reflect a positive picture overall with the majority of the required standards being met, particularly in respect of the quality of care provided to children and young people and the interaction/relationships between staff and young people being good.

In the main, the requirements that needed attention were identified as:-

- the physical standards of the homes i.e. decoration and upgrade of furniture and fittings;
- lack of documentation/information provided;
- care plans not being up to date;
- policies and procedures needing review;
- over-use of placements on an emergency basis and the impact these placements have on the existing group of young people.

The majority of these requirements have been addressed or are in the process of being worked on as part of an action plan for each home.

### **4.2 Annual Report Summary**

All residential homes are required to complete annual reports. They consider the current service provision, identify areas for development and improvement and set targets to achieve. The annual reports also focus on the management of the homes. This includes budgets, staff development, training, supervision and the use of resources; the personal development of young people; the link/key worker role; networks; education and employment; consultation; admissions and discharges; complaints; missing persons and absences without authority. Evaluation of the reports for all three homes over the three year period show year on year improvements in the quality of care provided. This can be demonstrated by reductions in the numbers of young people who are absent without authority, improved school or employment attendance and more admissions being planned.

### **4.3 End of Placement Reports**

All three homes are required to undertake exit interviews with the young people, their parents/carers and social workers at the point of discharge. End of placement questionnaires are used to obtain feedback and identify areas for improvement. As each of the residential homes provides different



functions for different age groups according to their Statement of Purpose, the content of the exit questionnaires varies. They do however aim to establish whether the placement has been successful in meeting the young people's needs and in providing good outcomes.

During the period considered for the purpose of this review, 45 exit questionnaires were evaluated: 12 were completed by young people, 14 were completed by parents/carers, 19 were completed by social workers.

The overall feedback was positive from young people, parents/carers and social workers. Of the 45 evaluation forms completed only two comments by parents could be viewed as negative. They related to "lack of bedroom space and furniture" and the view of one parent that their child was "unsettled in placement and not making progress". Most parents indicated they were satisfied with the care provided, with some parents commenting on how well-informed they were, how supportive, welcoming and conscientious staff had been and that their child had been well looked after. Social workers also commented on how supportive staff are in the residential homes.

Not unsurprisingly, the comments from young people were focused on wanting later times for coming in, more pocket money and one young person indicating they had not received a clothing grant. Only one young person did not feel the placement was right for them.

The positive evaluation from these reports is also reflected in the consultation feedback undertaken with young people and parents/carers for the purpose of the review (Annexe 6i Section 3.7).

## **4.4 Admission/Discharge Data**

Within the scope of the review, a detailed analysis of the admissions and discharges for the three residential homes was undertaken for the period 30.4.06 to 31.7.08. The following information details the findings.

The information demonstrates that a high number of the admissions were unplanned and made on an emergency basis, 65 in total for the whole review period with only 15 being planned or semi-planned. Of these emergency placements, 50 were in Pant Morfa which is the only residential home that caters for emergency provision within its Statement of Purpose. In the main, the young people who remained in Pant Morfa in the 3 longer term beds following their emergency admission did so by default as a vacancy arose rather than as part of a proper planning process. Evidence also suggests that many young people remained in the emergency provision beyond the 72 hours without appropriate plans being made. Some young people were given an extension of the emergency provision up to 28 days to allow for planning to take place.

As a result, children and young people were frequently being placed inappropriately without the benefit of a proper risk assessment, appropriate matching and with very little information. Much of the assessment of need and

care planning for these children and young people was not robust and in many cases there was little evidence of any in-depth preventative work being undertaken with families to avoid them coming into the care system. Some young people were placed within the establishments outside of the Statement of Purpose, resulting in inappropriately matched placements and subsequent placement breakdowns; the number of repeat admissions for some young people in the information below corroborates this.

**Breakdown of placements for each unit within the review period 01-04-06 to 31-07-08**

<b>Cartrefle</b>		<b>Pant Morfa</b>		<b>Maesteg</b>	
No 12	Planned Placements	No 2	Accommodated pre review date but still in residence within timescales	No 4	Accommodated pre review date but still in residence within timescales
2	Semi planned Placements	2	Planned Admissions	5	Planned Admissions
11	Unplanned Placements	50	Unplanned Placements	4	Unplanned Placements
	<i>Discharges</i>		<i>Discharges</i>		<i>Discharges</i>
14	Planned Discharges	50	Planned Discharges	9	Planned Discharges
5	Unplanned Discharges	1	Unplanned Discharge	2	Unplanned Discharges
1	Self Discharge	3	Still Accommodated	2	Still Accommodated
5	Still Accommodated				

For the whole of the review period there were:

- 92 separate Admissions
- 19 planned Admissions
- 65 unplanned Admissions (this is predominately made up of emergency admissions to Pant Morfa)
- 2 semi planned Admissions
- 6 young people already placed prior to the review dates but accommodated within time frame
  
- 73 Planned Discharges
- 8 Unplanned Discharges
- 1 Self Discharge

- 10 Still Accommodated

Throughout this period there were:

- 60 young people who were accommodated within the time frame of the review
- 40 young people had single episodes of accommodation
- 14 young people had 2 episodes of accommodation
- 2 young people had 3 episodes of accommodation
- 2 young people had 4 episodes of accommodation
- 2 young people had 5 episodes of accommodation

Within the above group, several young people had a number of moves within the 3 residential homes:

- 5 young people transferred from one home to another
- 7 young people had been accommodated in Cartrefle and Pant Morfa
- 2 young people had been accommodated in Cartrefle and Maesteg
- 1 young person had been accommodated in Maesteg and Pant Morfa
- 1 young person had been accommodated in all three homes

Of the 92 separate admissions, there were 76 separate discharges where the outcomes for the young people were as follows:

- 37 discharges resulted in a return home to parents or family member
- 20 discharges resulted in a move to a foster placement of which:
  - 3 In-house
  - 9 Independent Fostering Agencies
  - 8 Resolutions Adolescent Fostering Scheme
- 9 discharges resulted in move to supported independent living
- 5 discharges resulted in secure accommodation
- 3 discharges resulted in a move to out of county residential provision
- 1 discharge resulted in a transfer to another local authority

In addition there were:

- 6 internal discharges involving placement moves to other in-house residential establishments

and

- 10 young people remained in placement within the 3 residential homes

For those 20 young people who moved to foster placements, it was evident that this type of placement better suited their individual needs and were more age-appropriate.

In respect of the 8 young people who moved to secure accommodation, custody or out of county residential provision it was evident that their needs could not be met within the in-house provision.

Nine young people went on to live in supported independent living. This demonstrates effective work being undertaken in preparation for independence by the residential homes with support from the after care service to achieve positive outcomes for young people. In addition, it supports the view of the project team that there is a continued need for this type of provision to be further developed as part of an integrated Post 16 service.

For 37 young people, positive outcomes were achieved in that the work the residential establishments undertook with the young people and their families resulted in a return to their parents or a family member.

## 4.5 Occupancy Data Analysis

An analysis of the occupancy levels in all three residential homes was undertaken for the purpose of the review, including the year preceding the review period and the full financial year following the end of the review period. This provides comparative data to demonstrate the impact that the Threshold of Care Panel started to have after its implementation in 2007.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Cartrefle</b>	<b>Pant Morfa</b>	<b>Maesteg</b>
01.04.05 to 31.03.06	85.91%	88.49%	99.25%
01.04.06 to 31.03.07	70.41%	79.80%	94.25%
01.04.07 to 31.03.08	80.65%	82.10%	85.11%
01.04.08 to 31.03.09	88.93%	72.00%	64.73%
<b>Total Average occupancy for whole period</b>	<b><u>81.47%</u></b>	<b><u>80.59%</u></b>	<b><u>85.83%</u></b>

Pant Morfa occupancy data still to be verified

During the review period, the 92 admissions resulted in the following lengths of occupancy

<b>Number of placements</b>	<b>Length of stay</b>
45	1 Day to 1 Week
7	1 Week to 1 Month
17	1 Month to 3 Months
2	3 Months to 6 Months
3	6 Months to 1 Year
4	1 Year to 2 Years
3	2 Years to 3 Years
1	3 Years plus

6 young people were accommodated prior to the review date, but still resident within the review period. Their whole period of accommodation has been used for the above analysis.

There were 10 young people still accommodated in the residential homes after the review period ended.

The year 2005/06 occupancy was high for all three establishments. This can be attributed to placements being made outside of the Statement of Purpose with the majority of placements being made on an emergency basis and prior to the impact the Threshold of Care Panel began to have on the numbers becoming looked after. In addition, it can be evidenced in the data provided in section 4.4 on admissions and discharges, that there was little preventative work and early intervention with families, resulting in high numbers of children becoming looked after. The establishment of the Threshold of Care Panel alongside the Looked After Children Project began to have an impact on placements as it tightened the admission procedure and ensured more robust care planning so that accommodation was only provided for children who were in the most need of safe care.

## **4.6 Financial Cost Analysis**

### **Background**

As part of the review of in-house residential care provision for children and young people within Bridgend, a comparative exercise has been undertaken to compare the costs of residential care against other in-house provision as well as against costs in other authorities.

### **Budgets**

Budgets are set at the start of each financial year based on the best expectation of the needs of the service for that year. The total residential budget across all each of the available placement options for 2008/09 was £6.997m. In 2009/10, it is £6.476m. As part of the investment into service improvements the budgets in 2007/08 and 2008/09 saw growth aimed at

investing in preventative measures and alternative placement options with a longer term view of reducing the demand on more costly placements – primarily focussing on growing in-house fostering and reducing demand on Independent Fostering Agencies. The fostering element of this was on the basis of an Invest to Save with investment of £153k over the 2 years, requiring repayment in 2009/10 of £123k, and a final repayment of £43k in 2010/11. In addition to this ‘pump-priming’ funding was secured by the service amounting to £531k un the same period, with a further £19k in 2009/10, focussed at increasing front-line services staffing and investment in adoption with a view to reducing the numbers of children looked after. This investment was intended to achieve savings in placement costs, anticipated for 2009/10 to be £288k, which has been represented in the residential (IFA) budgets. A further £100k reduction in each of the years 2008/09 and 2009/10 has been included in the budget as an anticipated outcome of the restructuring of residential services, however this has not been achievable to date due to the need to undertake this review.

A breakdown of the budget is as follows:

Service	Net budget 2008/09	Outturn 2008/09	Net budget 2009/10
Out of County residential	£1,314,990	£1,361,140	£1,253,280
In-house residential services <sup>1</sup>	£942,350	£1,018,005	£858,030
Resolutions	£170,520	£113,545	£196,044
Independent Fostering Agency	£1,788,100	£2,813,868	£1,542,720
In-house fostering	£2,781,390	£2,243,455	£2,625,803
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£6,997,350</b>	<b>£7550,013</b>	<b>£6,475,877</b>

\*as at 38 February 2009

<sup>1</sup> Includes the 2008/09 budget strategy saving of £100,000 2008/09 and £200,000 2009/10  
Includes Fostering Team

Although improvements have been achieved, as evidenced by the removal of the Serious Concerns protocol in 2009, the expected impact on expenditure has, for a range of reasons, not been successful and the service faces continued pressure in the numbers of looked after children.

From the above in 2008/09 there was an overspend of £552,663 against the cumulative budgets. The main reason for this was the continued pressure on Independent Fostering Agency placements which was, in part, offset by savings against in-house fostering provision as a result of lower than anticipated numbers of foster carers. The anticipated position for 2009/10 is a £1.27m overspend (as at 30 June 2009).

### Comparison of unit costs

The comparative direct costs of each of the above placement settings are shown below. These do not include any apportionment of assessment care

management staff nor departmental or central overheads and are the direct costs of each service.

Setting	Weekly average cost equivalent	Annual average cost equivalent
Average Out of county residential (net of Education & Health contributions)	£1,975	£102,700
Community Home <sup>2</sup>	£1,422	£73,944
Resolutions <sup>3</sup>	£914	£47,537
Independent Fostering	£763	£39,845
In-house Fostering <sup>4</sup>	£366	£15,106

<sup>1</sup> During 2008/09 health contributed to 4 placements and Education 9 placements, though 2 of these were for a very small element. The weekly cost gross of Health contribution was £2,361 (£122,722pa) and gross of both Health and Education was £3,034 (£157,768pa)

<sup>2</sup> Community Home costs include direct staff costs employed at the home.

<sup>3</sup> Resolutions includes direct staffing costs only

<sup>4</sup> In-house fostering includes fostering team staffing costs.

From the above and in very simplistic financial terms, in-house provision is the lowest cost; however a value-for-money comparison requires a wider analysis that takes proper account of overheads as well as outcomes. For example do independent fostering agency placements offer a better or more effective service than in-house? If not, then it could be argued that the in-house provision is a much more cost effective means of providing this service.

A more detailed analysis of the 3 community homes, comparing standard unit cost (based on total budget and available nights) versus actual unit cost based on actual nights used is set out below. This shows that over the last 4 years the average standard unit cost has slightly increased, based on an anticipated 100% occupancy, but actual unit costs have significantly increased due to a reduction in the occupancy rates over the period.

	Beds	Weekly costs			
		2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
<b>Maesteg Community Home</b>	4				
Adjusted Standard unit cost		£ 1,427	£ 1,617	£ 1,631	£ 1,583
Actual unit cost		£ 1,438	£ 1,716	£ 1,916	£ 2,446
<b>Cartrefle Community Home</b>	5				
Adjusted Standard unit cost		£ 1,271	£ 1,342	£ 1,474	£ 1,414
Actual unit cost		£ 1,479	£ 1,906	£ 1,827	£ 1,590
<b>Pant Morfa Community Home</b>	5				
Adjusted Standard unit cost		£ 1,203	£ 1,279	£ 1,359	£ 1,268
Actual unit cost		£ 1,359	£ 1,602	£ 1,671	£ 1,761
<b>Average all homes</b>	14				
Adjusted Standard unit cost		£ 1,300	£ 1,413	£ 1,488	£ 1,422
Actual unit cost		£ 1,425	£ 1,741	£ 1,805	£ 1,932

## Comparison to other local authorities

In order to get a feel for where Bridgend's costs sit in relation to the wider market an analysis including a number of comparative authorities was carried out. The outcome of this is detailed below.

### 4.1 Residential settings (non-specialist)

Home	No Beds	Budget 2008/09	Standard weekly cost per placement	Standard annual cost per placement	Comments
<b>Bridgend Homes</b>					
Maesteg	4	£339,133	£1,630	£84,783	
Cartrefle	5	£356,424	£1,370	£71,848	
Pant Morfa	5	£350,217	£1,347	£70,043	
<b>Other Local Authority homes</b>					
<i>Newport City Council</i>					
Facility 1	6	£683,000	£2,189	£113,828	
Facility 2	6	£671,000	£2,151	£111,833	
<i>Wrexham</i>					
Outsourced			£2,100	£109,200	Wrexham has outsourced its community home provision but it is currently reviewing future provision
<i>Caerphilly County Borough Council</i>					
Facility 1	4	£560,352	£2,694	£140,088	
<i>Vale of Glamorgan</i>					
Wentworth House	4	£551,200	£2,650	£137,800	Vale has outsourced its community home provision to Castle Care and uses the facility for 16-17 year olds with a view to independence within 12-18 months. 5 year block contract 2 years to run. Inflation built into cost

From the above analysis, it is clear that Bridgend's provision is at a much lower cost base than the other authorities. However, there may be differences:- accounting across the authorities. Not all authorities have such provision, Carmarthenshire County Council only provide respite services and has no Community Homes.

Whilst there is a very small sample for comparison, the level of staffing varies between Bridgend and the other authorities who provide their own facilities, with Bridgend having the lowest staff numbers and with the lowest staff: child



ratio, on the assumption of full occupancy, although the ratios for the other establishments make the same assumption.

Authority	Staffing FTE per establishment	Staff : Child ratio
<i>Bridgend</i>		
Maesteg	9.85	2.45
Cartrefle	9.78	1.95
Pant Morfa	9.78	1.95
Newport	17.08	2.85
Caerphilly	14.45	3.61

## 4.7 Staff Profiling Analysis

The staffing across the three residential homes consists of:

- 3 x residential managers;
- 6 x senior residential workers;
- 24 x residential workers (both full and part-time staff) There are currently three vacancies: one residential worker and two annualised hours posts.

The numbers of staff holding a required qualification for the position they fulfil are:-

- 2 x qualified residential managers  
(NVQ level 4 Care, NVQ Level 4 Management, MCI)
- 3 x qualified senior residential workers  
(NVQ Level 4 Care)
- 18 x qualified residential workers  
(NVQ Level 3 Care)

The profiling exercise, detailed in Annexe 5, demonstrates that there is an abundance of different skills and experience which is not being utilised in its fullest sense to meet the needs of our looked after children, some of whom could be catered for in house at a much lower cost if the residential service were to be redesigned to maximise use of these skills.

It is recognised that the level of care provided by the homes is of a consistently high standard, evidenced by CSSIW inspection reports and reinforced by the analysis of data gathered for the purpose of this review. In undertaking this exercise, it is clear that the qualifications, skills and experience of the residential staff could be developed to better support looked

after children. By drawing on and developing staff skills further there is scope to offer a range of complementary services within and from a unit, for example:-

- Education on site
- Counselling service
- Mentoring/advocacy
- Project work
- Parenting classes
- Preventative work
- Outreach work with families and young people
- After care

If we are to continue to offer a high standard of residential care within Bridgend, then with a little creativity and investment in time and training, Bridgend could provide an in-house provision to meet the needs of some of those young people with more complex needs, rather than sourcing provision from outside the authority at a high cost. There is also scope to be more creative in how residential staff are utilised as part of a resource that could provide a 'wrap around and early intervention service' with input from education, health and other support services to achieve positive outcomes for young people. Research indicates that intensive intervention in the first 6 weeks of a young person being accommodated has an impact on the success of rehabilitation and may reduce the number of repeat admissions.

## **4.8 Case File Analysis**

During the review period, a comprehensive case file analysis of a representative sample group of 36 young people who had experienced both in-house and external residential care was undertaken (Annexe 4). This group would have included some of the 60 young people considered in the admission and discharge data for the 3 in-house residential units in section 4.4 along with other young people who had experienced residential care elsewhere during the review period.

Of the 36 young people considered:

- 21 were male
- 15 were female
  
- 19 were accommodated under Section 20 of the Children Act 1989 (voluntary accommodation)
- 14 were subject of Care Orders under Section 31
- 2 were remanded to the care of the local authority
- 1 was placed under powers of police protection and subsequently accommodated
  
- 12 had experienced external residential placements

- 31 had experienced the in house residential homes:
  - 18 were placed in Pant Morfa residential home
  - 8 were placed in Cartrefle residential home
  - 5 were placed in Maesteg residential home

The key findings from the case file analysis indicated that there are three main themes that are common to all young people and can be seen as contributory factors to them becoming looked after within internal or external residential provision.

These common themes are:

- lack of educational opportunities/attainment
- challenging behaviour
- placement disruptions

The first two of these themes were areas of concern prior to the young people becoming looked after and continued to be the main challenges throughout their care history.

Thirty-five of the young people were found to have histories of challenging behaviour throughout their care history. As a result, 29 young people experienced 2 or more placements. Of particular note was the number of foster placement breakdowns prior to the current residential placement the young person was in at the time of the case file analysis.

Eighteen of the young people had Special Educational Needs Statements. All of the above 35 young people had experienced disruptive patterns to their education and found education challenging during unsettled periods. The analysis noted that this pattern manifested itself into negative behaviour with young people refusing to engage in education and often subsequent school exclusion. Alternative provisions were explored and provided where possible, e.g. change of school, input from the Looked After Children Education team (LACE) or external provision such as Amelia Trust Farm, but the indications are that this was often not enough to maintain the in-house residential placements.

Four young people in particular displayed extreme behaviour ranging from physical assault, extensive offending, sexualised behaviour and continual absconding. This led to multiple placement breakdowns and moves to more specialist out of county residential provisions, including custody. Evidence from the case file analysis of these 4 young people suggests that the educational needs of this group were extensively disrupted and despite best efforts within existing arrangements, they received no consistent formal education.

The evidence also suggests that for 7 of the young people who were in out of county residential provision at the time of the review, the placements were meeting their needs and they were making progress. This group displayed

similar significant challenging behaviour which was being managed through the provision of “wrap around” or additional support from on-site services such as behaviour management, psychological/therapeutic services, life journey work, play therapy and one to one educational programmes. It is significant to note that all the young people in the case file sample within this group responded well to one to one support. This is in stark contrast to the quality and levels of support young people with similar needs are provided with, from local specialist services, when placed in house. However, this does partly account for the differences in cost.

Having said this, the findings indicate that short term intervention within in-house residential provision has proved positive for some young people who have had a successful outcome in returning home to family. This suggests that, with investment in an integrated service approach as part of a continuum of care, residential in-house provision could have a more significant role in achieving good outcomes for children and young people.

In addition, the indications from the findings are such that, at the conclusion of the care pathway analysis, of the 4 young people remaining in the in-house residential homes, 3 young people had pathway plans in place to work towards independence and 1 young person will remain in residential in-house provision long term, though this has implications our ability to use this resource for other placements, due to that young person’s specialist needs. 6 young people were in foster placements, of which 5 were in-house placements.

Nine young people were no longer looked after but receiving an after care service, 2 of whom were in supported lodgings and 7 were being supported in independent accommodation. This suggests a real need for a post 16 service on an integrated basis with a range of agency providers on board and residential provision being part of this service to support transition towards independence.

## **4.9 Consultation**

As part of the review process a consultation exercise was undertaken with residential staff, a representative group of 31 children/young people and their parents/carers, social workers and other professional stakeholders.

Residential staff from the three residential homes participated in a one day consultation workshop, facilitated by members of the Project Team. This included a presentation by the Principal Officer leading the Review Project on the scope of the Review Project and the work that would be undertaken by the project team and a presentation of the comparative financial costs of residential care by the Finance Officer. Staff participated in small groups in a number of discussion workshops focussed on identifying what they felt works well within the in-house residential provision, where there were areas for improvement which would contribute to better outcomes for young people, identifying key skills and experience of staff that could be utilised better and in

contributing to ideas on the redesign of the service and future models of provision.

The consultation day assisted in enabling staff to understand the rationale for a review of the residential provision, to debate the pros and cons and to work together to consider how residential care could better meet the needs of young people with a redesigned service that would optimise the outcomes for those identified as needing a residential provision. This engagement and opportunity for staff to participate fully in the identification of what could work in the future led to a number of suggestions. These are in line with the findings from research, the case file analysis and the general view that an integrated service approach will be more effective. The overall consensus was that:

- some young people will be better served by being placed in a residential home
- early intervention and preventative work from support services is critical to the success of any residential provision
- there is a growing need for a transition service to meet the needs of the young people who are 16+

In addition, during the first quarter of 2009, LEO @ Tros Gynnal was commissioned to undertake a review of the residential service in Bridgend, by engaging with young people, their parents, social workers and professionals.

Questionnaires were devised for each group, to look at whether they valued the services provided by the residential homes in Bridgend, what the homes did well, what could be improved and for workers, what the priorities for the future should be.

### **Methodology:**

It was decided, given the nature of the questions to be asked, that 1:1 interviews with children and young people would be carried out rather than sending out questionnaires or setting up focus groups. Thirty one young people were contacted and we completed 20 questionnaires with this group.

Parents and 'carers' questionnaires were usually carried out via a telephone interview. Some interviews were carried out via a face-to-face interview where the young person had returned home and the worker was visiting them as well. Thirty-one parents or grandparents were contacted and we completed 13 questionnaires with this group.

Social workers and professionals were contacted via e-mail initially with some receiving a follow up reminder by post. Ninety-one people were contacted and asked to fill in a questionnaire but we received only twenty two back from this group.

A report for each group consultation has been written outlining the summary of findings and giving a conclusion. These reports can be found in Annexes 6i,

6ii and 6iii. Each report also includes a breakdown of the data from each of the questionnaires, anonymised where necessary. The following is a closer look at the themes emerging from the questionnaire responses and from the workers carrying out the consultation exercise.

### **Common Themes:**

All groups highlighted that the young people we had spoken to or asked about had experienced several placement breakdowns. This was evident in the number of admissions and types of placement experienced by young people and the view from parents that residential placement was the best option as it had fewer breakdowns than other placements.

The young people and parents spoken to, on the whole, felt they had had little choice about the placement before admission. This was also a theme in the professionals / stakeholders' responses as several indicated they would have preferred a foster placement for the young person had one been available. The reasons for the placement at one of the residential homes had often been the breakdown of previous placements and the emergency nature of the need for placement. The safety, security and stability of the placements were also highlighted particularly by the parents' and workers' groups, when they were asked about what the homes did well. This further supports the possibility that for some of the young people in the survey, instability of placement had previously been a problem.

There was strong agreement between all groups that the homes support young people to engage in a wide range of activities and encourage young people to attend school or training whilst they are placed there. The responses from most professionals were that the homes worked well with them, with those from an educational background being particularly positive about joint working.

The overall scores for the care received by the young person once at the home were again positive from all groups. There was some concern, mainly from parents and workers, that the mix of young people needs more consideration. There were several responses about young people learning bad behaviours from those they are placed with and the need to ensure the homes do not become a "sin bin" for young people whose behaviour is very challenging. In contrast, when workers were asked who the homes should be for in the future, the majority suggested they should be for young people with particularly disruptive and offending behaviours.

Some of the young people and parents felt very strongly that the residential placement was the right one as the young person did not feel that they wanted to "fit in" with another family. This was also mirrored in the feedback from some workers who remarked that older young people did not want a "substitute family".

One theme that came through strongly in the workers' and parents' feedback was that they felt the residential workers were able to "cope" with a wider

range of behaviours that young people may present, particularly “challenging behaviour”. This, they suggested was due to a combination of training, experience and the fact that a team is more able to deal with these behaviours than one or two foster carers.

Some of the young people commented that they had felt bored and that there was not enough to do at their residential home. Overall, many parents and workers commented on the poor staffing levels.

One of the most commonly made remarks about how to improve the homes, from the perspective of the young people involved, was wanting to have broadband internet access. Many of the young people felt it was unreasonable not to have broadband, partly for school work and partly as all their friends did and this made them feel different.

When asked if they felt listened to at the home, 60% of the young people responded positively and 30% negatively. The remaining 10% did not respond. The majority of parents and workers involved commented on how well the homes worked with them and kept them informed about the young people. However, there were also some parents who felt this was not their experience. Even though many workers had commented on how good communication was between agencies and the homes, communication was also one of the most commonly suggested improvements that could be made.

There was some feeling from all groups that services should be provided within Bridgend County Borough Council. This is for a variety of reasons which differ depending on who is being asked. The young people we spoke to, who had experienced being placed out of county, felt strongly that they were too far from family and friends. This was also the case with some of the parents who felt that it was difficult to keep in contact if their child was placed at a distance. In addition, some parents were concerned about the safety of placing their children out of county as they felt that, if they were unhappy, they would still run away. Where workers had commented on this, their concerns were more about out of county placement costs being higher with some also commenting on safety.

Some of the workers and professionals who were consulted in this process felt they could not comment on the role of residential services and many did not reply at all. This was despite all those contacted being involved with children and young people in general, many of whom had potentially used the services. A list of services was provided to consultees and they were asked if they felt that the Residential Service did provide them. Although the majority of people agreed that they did provide a large number of the services, there was also a lot of confusion and many indicated they didn't know. This provides some evidence that there is a lack of understanding about the role of the Residential Service and its staff.

There was some difference within the groups regarding the preparation of young people for independent living. 55% of young people felt they were well-prepared, 35% said they were not and 10% said they weren't sure. Several

parents suggested that not enough was being done to prepare the young people for leaving the homes and one said there should be more choices available for those about to leave care. However several thought much was being done and that their child had benefitted. Many of the workers had commented on the positive aspects of the homes preparing young people for independence, but there were also comments saying more of this work needed to be carried out. On the whole, workers who commented seemed to suggest this work was carried out so well it would be better to promote this service more fully, potentially increasing resources for this purpose.

Within the consultation exercise, in relation to future models of provision, views were only sought specifically from professionals (Annexe 6iii). This group felt the three areas that most needed development were:

- independent living with intensive / task focused work with input from careers, social housing and benefits agency;
- individual activity-based programmes designed to meet young people's identified needs;
- an intensive wrap around service, drawing in outside agencies for specific pieces of work (e.g. substance misuse or mental health issues and to stabilise behaviour).

The variety of groups involved in the consultation was wide and there was no overarching consensus about the existing in-house residential provision or future for the service. Many different suggestions were made to improve services, which are explored more fully in each of the reports. There is evidence from the consultation that the majority of those who responded did value the services and considered that the residential establishments provided safe, stable and secure homes for young people. All groups agreed there was a need for some young people to have residential placements as they felt that the provision of a foster placement may not be appropriate in meeting their needs. This might be for a variety of reasons, primarily as a result of their own experiences of being parented by their birth family. However, it was also important that they are not treated differently from other young people when part of a group-living environment.

Key research messages from children and young people show that young people appreciate homes where:

- they are not bullied, sexually harassed or led into trouble
- staff listen, the regime is fair and kind and the other children are friendly
- things improve for them – such as in education

Lastly, it was agreed by all groups that young people and their families preferred services to be local to the Bridgend area.



## 4.10 Analysis of Research on Models of Practice

**An analysis of research available was undertaken as part of the review to consider models of practice and issues arising relating to residential provision within the United Kingdom**

### **Market demand and supply**

Research suggests that the local needs analysis of the Borough should identify the mainstream needs of residential units, with less common highly specialist needs of individual children being met by regional arrangements and spot purchasing arrangements.

It also suggests that, as out of Authority provision can be devastating to the child's emotional health and to the Borough's resources, its use should only be used in the minority of cases in a clearly planned intervention.

Research indicates that a continuum of care is needed with provision supplied in a flexible "ladder of care", with movements between provision considered as appropriate, rather than as a last resort.

For such flexibility, links between fostering and residential services need to facilitate a two way transition for support and respite. Additionally, family support service provision would need review to facilitate structured intervention which supports such movement.

Some children clearly state a preference for the anonymity of group settings, and the majority of children prefer continuity of a carer, building up attachments which can follow through their care history.

**Group settings** are generally able to deal with mainstream needs. Some children have stated that they prefer the anonymity of such units, with the support of independent living skills potentially improved as they move into adulthood, for instance less staff attention, allowing more risk management and learning from risk taking in a supported environment.

**Location of units** has not been considered in any great detail.

### **Revision of current provision**

All models of practice studied deal with complex needs within units.

Suggested ways to meet specialist areas of need include:

- 1. Multi-agency working around the child:** Benefits of this system include dividing work into manageable elements. However input from agencies can be liable to delays due to waiting lists and other prioritised client groups. This could leave the child unsupported and the staff on

hand may feel deskilled or unrecognised in the support they could provide.

**2. Multi-agency Looked After panels** are currently increasing. With the onset of statutory obligations and “ordinary residence” the need for joint planning and joint funding of placements is now vital. Such funding arrangements should include education and the Criminal Justice system.

**3. Access to consultants and links to other agencies as advisors** was seen as particularly positive. Methods of offering mental health support within any residential provision should be reviewed.

**4. Multi-skilled staff mix:** Generally there are many positives to having staff with specialist skills on site. “Normalisation” efforts also encourage the use of community resources and should be borne in mind as a significant issue for children in care.

No definitive research on models of practice exists for residential care. Qualitative studies prove that residential programmes applying behavioural therapeutic methods and focussing on family involvement show the most promising short term outcomes.

Generally research reveals three strands which models of residential care for children and young people, should consider.

- place families at the centre of the stage
- tackle the root causes of family breakdown
- use of the third sector

### **Families at the centre**

Current research very clearly states that where there is no history of abuse, there is a lack of residential provision for families. This is despite the fact that such provision for the whole family has fared well in preliminary evaluation and has been found to be effective in reducing high risk behaviours.

Additionally, research indicates that some of the biggest issues that undermine family relationships are dealt with by adult services who need to be more involved in supporting the family as a whole, including children in the household.

Methods of improving the family focus of interventions would also include the use of extended family members, more family-oriented environments and family support in the community. This will involve the use of kinship care, specialised fostering and family support.

### **Root causes of family breakdown**

Family breakdown is highlighted as predominantly related to –

- domestic violence
- drug and alcohol-related addiction
- financial issues

Any model of practice defined within this review would benefit from fostering and family support service reviews including consideration of such services as:

- family havens (a daycentre with parenting support provision)
- co-operation between education and children’s social services in delivering provision not only within residential but family support provision
- family fostering schemes e.g. “Save the Family”
- family service hubs with an enhanced role for health visitors e.g. Sure Start and “ Stronger Families “ agenda being driven by the Welsh Assembly.
- an integrated approach to substance misuse, with specialist residential care for families with addiction issues
- links to the National Parenting Schemes
- relationship education within schools e.g. Student Assistance Programme, counselling programme presently being developed
- the use of credit unions. to address major financial issues within families.

Any such reviews should also consider family intervention projects (FIPS) which deliver –

- outreach support within family homes on a daily basis
- support in specialist temporary accommodation within the community
- 24 hour support in residential units.

This provision is presently being evaluated by DFES and reports note it can be a very effective model.

### **Use of the third sector**

All service level agreements and linking protocols with external agencies will require review. The links within the Children & Young People’s Partnership would need to focus upon commissioning and process development support the residential system developed.

## 5 OPTIONS FOR MODELS OF PROVISION

### Potential 'Options'

A number of models and options have been considered in light of the 'evidence' that has emerged from the research and the various processes followed in the 'fieldwork' element of the review.

#### Option 1 – Preferred Option

- Retain existing units but change their statements of purpose to deliver provisions for:
  - a short term emergency and assessment
  - challenging behaviour with a dedicated education and therapeutic resource
  - 16+ transition and support

The group felt that there was strong evidence emanating from the review to suggest that a number of children currently in costly out of county placements could return to a re-configured in-house provision with a dedicated education and therapeutic resource. The short-term assessment unit would need to work closely with the family support service, as a preventative mechanism, to avoid unnecessary family breakdowns.

This option offers the potential to make a savings in the out of county placement costs through the potential to return 1 placement to in-house as well as divert a child from entering such a placement. In addition there is likely to be some scope to prevent admission to Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) placements. At an average Social Services cost of 2 out of county and 2 IFA placements, there could be the potential to 'save' £285,000 per annum. If contributions from Education and Health were to be included these savings could be greater. In achieving such a service it would be necessary to meet the educational needs of such children. Currently where such support is needed at an out of county residential placement Education (for some placements) contribute to the overall cost. By returning such a placement there are potential Education budget savings to be achieved. These savings would be offset by the need to provide additional support in the form of educational and therapeutic resources in-house which would need to be quantified both in terms of number of staff and associated costs.

#### Option 2

- Close 1 unit and commission an emergency/assessment service from an external agency
- Retain 2 units – one to focus on adolescent/challenging behaviour and other on transition

#### Option 3

- Close 1 unit and move children/young people to where this would be appropriate
- Retain 2 units – one to focus on adolescent/challenging behaviour and the other on transition

The group felt that options 2 and 3 were not supported by the evidence that has emerged from the review. In addition, many local authorities are in the process of increasing their in-house residential provision to meet identified needs. Also, there is a need to be mindful of the recommendations contained within Lord Laming's report that residential care has an important role to play in the lives of some children who need to be looked after.

The closure of 1 unit would require resourcing alternative placements, either through our in-house provision or from Independent Fostering Agencies. The average cost of a community home in 2008/09 was £342,000 whilst the cost of alternative provision within the independent sector is on average £40,000. The need to secure an additional 4 placements would cost £160,000 or for 5 placements £200,000. This would suggest that there are potential savings to be achieved through this option, however, disrupting a placement by forcing a child's move to another carer can cause future disruption potentially requiring an out of county residential placement at much higher cost. This option could be achieved through allowing the number of children at a home to run down naturally as children progress from the establishment, but this could mean in the short-term the unit cost of in-house residential placement significantly increasing, particularly if only 1 child remains resident for a period of time. It would be anticipated that the level of staffing could also be reduced with reduced numbers of children, although there would still be a need for a minimum staffing level to provide 24/7 cover.

These costs also do not take account of any potential redundancy costs that would need to be met. These may well be short-term costs but could take a number of years to repay.

#### **Option 4**

- Retain the existing units with no changes to their existing statements of purpose.

The group felt that this was not the best use of resources and the research and consultation process confirmed the need to re-shape the existing provision.

There would be no financial impact on this option as no additional resources would be required neither would any savings be achievable.

## 6 CONCLUSION

Research and findings from this review show that most children will benefit from being in a family setting as has been the thrust of government policy in recent years. As a result, more children than ever are in foster placements. It is also recognised that intervening earlier in children's lives to keep children with their families will change the nature of care. Hopefully this will take us towards a smaller number of children in care with only those most in need of its support entering the care system. Nevertheless, residential care has an important role to play as part of the range of placement options.

For a significant number of children, particularly older children, a residential placement will be the right choice. In other cases, too, residential care has a role to play in enabling other placement types to succeed. It may, for example, be used to provide a valuable bridge for young people who are not yet ready into settle in a family placement and we need to use residential services more creatively in supporting children living in foster care. It is therefore essential that the recommendations from this review focus on ensuring that the residential service provides good quality care, in valued and dynamic settings, able to support children and young people in their development, and to enable them to move on where appropriate.

It should not be seen and used as a last resort but as a flexible alternative solution viewed positively for the outcomes it can achieve in the right circumstances.

Children and young people who require residential care will have complex needs and it is essential that all services meeting these needs are of a high quality, and readily available, in order to achieve the best possible outcomes. As such, all agencies with responsibility for working with children and young people should be involved in planning for services for individual children and in strategic planning.

## **7 ANNEXES**

1. External Inspection Report Themes
2. Annual Report Summary
3. End of Placement Analysis Report
4. Staff Profile Analysis
5. Consultation Reports
  - 5: i Young people
  - 5: ii Parents/Carers
  - 5: iii Stakeholders-Social Work Staff and Other Professionals
  - 5: iv Summary Report
  - 5: v Residential Staff Consultation Workshop Summary
  - 5: vi Residential Workshop Residential Review Presentation
  - 5: vii Cost of Residential Care Presentation
6. Analysis of Research on Models of Practice

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### **Evaluation of Annual External Inspection Reports for Maesteg, Pant Morfa & Cartrefle**

The Care & Social Services Inspectorate for Wales inspect the three residential homes annually.

There are thirty seven standards with thirty six being applicable that the three homes are measured against.

All three homes have/hold a Certificate of Registration stating the conditions of their registration. Residential staff are expected to hold NVQ Level 3 Caring for Children and Young People and senior residential staff to hold Level 4 Caring for Children and Young People with the residential manager holding both Level 4 Caring for Children and Young People and Level 4 Management. The competencies of the staff are reflected in the inspection reports.

The thirty six standards embrace all aspects of residential care, including the physical and emotional well being of the young people, staff required registration with the Care Council plus C.R.B. checks, and the physical environment.

Overall, the inspections for 2006, 2007 and 2008 reflect that the three homes mostly meet the standard requirements of the standards. Over the three year capture, there were eight good practice recommendations with two of these being repeated. There were a total of fourteen requirements with some requirements appearing annually.

There has never been any concerns of the quality of care provided in any of the homes and the inspection reports reflect positive feedback from questionnaires they have given out and also mentioned is the good interaction between the young people and the staff.

## THEMES FROM EXTERNAL INSPECTIONS

### 2006

#### REGULATIONS

Requirement in relation to decoration.  
Documentation not provided on admission & reviews not carried out.  
Policies and procedures should be reviewed.  
All admissions should take into account the impact on other young people already resident.

#### GOOD PRACTICE

Clarification on whose responsibility it is to complete assessment and action records.

### 2007

#### REGULATIONS

Certificates needed updating.  
Turnbuckle locks need fitting.  
Registration of the home should be amended to change the number and age range.

#### GOOD PRACTICE

Consideration should be given to developing the Regulation 32 reports to include responsibility for action and review of progress on action points on subsequent visits  
Councillors had a monthly rota of visits but were not consistently visiting the home on a monthly basis and this needed to improve

### 2008

#### REGULATIONS

Some furniture needs replacing.  
Policies and procedures to be reviewed.  
Homes should not accept any emergency placement.  
Documentation should be provided on admission.  
All LAC documentation should be signed and dated.  
Children's guide needs to be amended.  
Admission into the home should be in line with the Statement of Purpose.

## **GOOD PRACTICE**

Parking issue to be addressed.

The authority should consider the establishment of a children's forum.

Clarification on whose responsibility it is to complete assessment and action records.

Maggie Melean/Jan Miller

24/04/09

**ANNUAL REPORT SUMMARY****FOR PERIOD: 1<sup>st</sup>.April 2005 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2006**

<b><u>Home</u></b>	<b><u>Manager</u></b>	<b><u>Beds</u></b>	<b><u>Age Range</u></b>
Cartrefle	M. Melean	5	15 ½ - 18 yrs
Maesteg	K. Culpek	4	11 – 15 ½ yrs
Pant Morfa	I. Muir	5 (Inclusive of 2 emergency beds)	13 – 17 yrs

The 3 homes annually produce Reports. The **aim** of these reports is to examine the current service position, build on established good service, identify weak areas and strengthen them and also to identify areas for service development. Whilst the 3 homes have different criteria required for admission (which is reflected in their Statement of Purpose) there are themes which are common to all 3 homes such as:-

### **Managerial**

Budgets  
Staff Training  
Supervision

### **Use of Resources**

Personal Development  
Keyworking  
Networks  
Education and Employment  
Staffing  
Young People's Meetings  
Admissions and Discharges  
Complaints  
Absences Without Authority

All 3 homes have produced a Business Plan in keeping with requirements of the Children's Services Directorate. Again as the Statement of Purpose vary from home to home so does the Business Plans, but the general objectives are the same, e.g. undertake review of residential provision, review policies and procedures, ensure compliance with regulations, meet requirements of the Children's Homes (Wales) Regulations.

These objectives are to be achieved within the individual homes timescales which in turn is monitored by the Principal Officer for Accommodation Services. Business Plans are reviewed and updated/amended annually.

**Current Service Level** at all 3 homes meet the CSSIW standards, as proven in their Inspection Reports. Almost all of the **staff** employed within the Residential Service are trained to the NVQ standard relevant to their post, with newer members of staff currently achieving this. Almost all are registered practitioners within the Care Council of Wales. With regards to **staff training** a training needs analysis is completed yearly and therefore a robust training system is in place within the homes.

All of the homes liaise with various supporting **networks** with communication methods available improved i.e. electronically. Relevant professionals are sometimes invited to attend staff meetings to give them a better insight into the running of the home. Parents/carers of a planned admission would be invited to look around the home and meet the staff (if appropriate). The general aim being that staff are pro-active in their communication with supporting agencies.

Examples of agencies are **Looked After Children's Education (LACE)** who provide an invaluable service for the young people. Staff are in regular contact with LACE, they can deal with issues that could be out of our remit. Education and training is given a high priority in all of the homes, with staff striving to obtain good communication levels with schools, colleges and training scheme applied to whatever is appropriate to the young person.

The **Youth Offending Service (YOS)**. Residential staff establish good working relationships with the young persons allocated worker which could include drug/alcohol workers **Children Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAHMS)**. Staff can contact CAMHS staff direct and in some circumstances CAMHS workers attend the units to work with the young people.

**Tros Gynnal** provide an advocacy service for our young people and visit the homes regularly providing confidential independent source of advice for our young people.

Other agencies we have developed good links with include police, schools, colleges, training providers, LAC health service, Taith, ISS, WCARDA.

Generally contact between residential staff and social services departments has much improved, despite communication between social workers and staff sometimes not being within timescales due to individual workloads. Where appropriate staff are trained to encourage communication between the young people and their families, irrespective of whether rehabilitation home is a possibility, with keyworkers being instrumental in this process.

All homes have procedures to follow for reporting a young person **missing** or alternatively being **absent without authority**. Again, these different admission criteria means different actions for staff to undertake in these situations, these actions being agreed with the manager of the home. Individuality of the young person also has a role to play here. Missing or being absent without authority can therefore fluctuate within each home for various reasons, such as one young person at Pant Morfa was responsible for 43% of the year's absent without authority figures, another reason is inappropriate placements. Given the diversity of the young people accommodated the percentages quoted in the annual reports appear to be acceptable.

On a **managerial** level, **the budgets** of each unit are managed and controlled by the managers with the exclusion of salaries. Each unit is required to remain within the limits of their budgets enabled by an exact process for recording and monitoring expenditure.

All units have good provision for staff **supervision** either general or on an individual basis. General supervision being in the form of regular staff meetings and daily hand over sessions, with individual being a more formal session between supervisor and supervisee carried out monthly, which encourages the personal and professional development of the staff member. Such sessions are documented on the supervisees file and the process monitored monthly by the principal officer.

**Admissions and discharges** obviously vary throughout the homes, with Pant Morfa's figures being considerably higher as a result of their 2 emergency beds provision.

Further detailed information of admissions and occupancy percentages are shown within this report. Each home has an admissions procedure which ensures that the correct paperwork has been completed. Also available on admission (or pre-admission) are user friendly booklets illustrating the services on offer.

The 3 units hold young people's meetings usually on a monthly basis. The importance of this is recognised within the homes and attendance of the young people is encouraged. However if this is not possible young people have every opportunity to discuss any issues with staff as and when they arise.

Each home offers an aftercare/outreach service to the young people on their discharge if appropriate, although the service varies from unit to unit. If the young people so wish, support from staff is offered as part of their Pathway Plan which is drawn up by the Aftercare Team. The young people are made aware that they can take advantage of the support and advice that is always available from staff.

All information is set out in the homes Annual Report and is available for inspection by any interested parties.

Maggie Melean/Jan Miller  
29/04/09

## **REPORT ON END OF PLACEMENT ANALYSIS FROM 2005 TO 2008**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of this report is to evaluate exit interviews from the three residential units – Cartrefle, Maesteg and Pant Morfa. As the three units provide different functions for different age groups, the format and content of forms differ for each unit. However, they all endeavoured to try and establish if the placement was successful for the individuals needs.

### **MAESTEG**

#### **The questionnaires for young people asked –**

Was the placement planned?  
Were you made to feel welcome on admission?  
Were you helped to keep in touch with your family?  
If they could change anything in the home, what would it be?

Typical responses showed that -  
The staff were very understanding and welcoming.  
Some responses were what you would expect, such as being able to come in late and wanting en-suite bathroom.

#### **Parents' questionnaires were more formal – copy attached.**

One parent felt their son had been looked after very well and thanked the staff for their help and support.  
Another parent thanked the staff for the care that their son was provided with. Parents were always kept informed of their child's day to day behaviour\*  
One parent felt the bedroom wasn't provided with appropriate furniture nor had sufficient space.  
Another parent felt that their daughter was unsettled and therefore not making progress.\*

\* Same parent.

#### **Social workers' questionnaires were designed with them in mind – copy attached.**

All feedback was positive. Some social workers have taken time to write how supportive the staff have been.



## **PANT MORFA**

### **The questionnaires for young people asked –**

Did they know why they were in Pant Morfa?

Did they know what their plan was?

Were they encouraged to keep in touch with family & friends?

Did they have reviews?

Some young people were aware of their plans.

Overall they were quite positive in relation to the questions asked.

The only quote was 'I didn't have a clothing grant that I was entitled to'.

### **Parents' questionnaires & Social Workers questionnaires – as Maesteg.**

No comments other than ticking the boxes.

## **CARTREFLE**

### **The format of the questionnaires for young people fell under four headings –**

Information received on admission.

Health.

Education/Training/Work.

Personal Development.

One young person felt that Cartrefle was not the right placement for her.

Another commented 'good fun, nice staff'.

### **Parents' questionnaires consisted of four items –**

Did Cartrefle meet expectations in providing suitable care?

Were you able to talk to manager or staff as required?

Were staff friendly, approachable and professional?

Did staff provide regular up to date information regarding the young person?

One parent indicated staff were very supportive and Cartrefle exceeded expectations.

Another found staff to be very conscientious.

### **Social Workers' questionnaires consisted of four items –**

Were you fully aware of the services offered prior to admission?

Did Cartrefle meet expectations in meeting the individual needs of the young person?

Were you kept fully informed of the progress of the young person?

Were you happy with the level of service provided?

Even though all the responses were positive, I felt that this may be due to the way the questions were set. Despite this, from experience, we know that for some young people placements at Cartrefle have not always been a positive experience for them due to being inappropriately placed.

### **CONCLUSION**

Obviously, experiences have been different for all young people. Overall, the end of placement evaluations reflect that they were generally positive. The views of parents and social workers have been similar to the young persons.

Out of a total of 45 evaluations there were only two observations that could be viewed as negative. So, by virtue of this one has to assume that residential care has been a mainly positive experience for those involved.

Maggie Melean  
29/4/09



Bridgend County Borough Council  
Children's Residential Review  
Employee Profiling Report

This report looks at staff experience, qualifications and skills within their working environment. It also gives an example of the skills and experience that they use outside of their working role which could possibly be developed to be used within the workplace.

The information was gathered by staff filling in an Employee Profiling form. The relevant manager's overview of the content of the forms may need to be sought to establish the accuracy of the information provided in relation to individuals perceived strengths/skills.

## **Structure**

The staffing numbers across the three homes consists of:

- 3 x Residential Managers
- 6 x Senior Residential Workers
- 24 x Residential Workers (this is a mixture of full and part-time staff)  
There is currently three vacancies, one residential worker and two annualised hours post.

(See Appendix 1 for full list of names and years of service)

## **Qualified Staff**

Number of Staff that hold a required qualification for the position they fulfil:

- 2 x Qualified Residential Managers  
(NVQ level 4 Care, NVQ Level 4 Management, MCI)
- 3 x Qualified Senior Residential Workers  
(NVQ Level 4 Care)
- 18 x Qualified Residential Workers  
(NVQ Level 3 Care)

## **Key Skills/Strengths**

Key skills/strengths identified by staff:

- Ability to communicate clearly and effectively at all levels.
- Ability to think clearly.
- Ability to relate to young people and their families.
- Ability to form constructive working relationships with colleagues and other agencies/professionals.
- Fundamental liking for children.
- Drive, commitment and motivation.
- Integrity.
- Initiative and positive thinking.
- Ability to work well under pressure.

- Ability to work flexibly.
- Commitment to personal development.
- Ability to recognise and meet individual needs, supporting individual rights and promoting choice.
- Contributing to the protection of individuals from abuse.
- Supporting young people when they are distressed.
- Supporting young people to develop personal relationships and a positive self-image.
- Supporting young people with difficult relationships.
- Preparing young people for the time they will leave the home through developing Independent living programmes.
- Contributing to the health, safety and security of individuals and their environment.
- Providing a good quality domestic environment.
- Able to effectively work within a team.
- An understanding of legislative requirements, and corporate and departmental policies and procedures.
- Using recording and communication systems appropriately.
- Ability to use computers.
- Able to deal with challenging behaviour and situations.
- Manage a staff team effectively.
- Structure supervision sessions to benefit staff.
- Able to effectively fulfil the role of a Link Worker.
- Able to work on own initiative to complete specific pieces of work or projects.
- Able to work with young people effectively around a number of issues e.g. sexual health, anger management.
- Able to communicate effectively with teachers/schools to promote best educational outcomes for young people.

### **Formal Qualifications/Training undertaken by staff that could benefit the development of Residential Services**

- Qualified teachers x 2
- Counselling Skills x 4
- Youth Workers x 2
- Catering x 2
- Sports coaching award x 3
- Mental Health nurse x 1
- Nursery nurse x 1
- NVQ level 3 assessors award x 2

### **Personal experience/skills that could benefit the work place**

There's an accumulated wealth of life experience that could be drawn upon to support looked after children. There is a large portion of the residential staff that either has or is bringing up a family, the skills they have developed undertaking this role could assist in supporting parents/carers to develop appropriate parenting/life skills.

Being able to communicate effectively at all levels allows for residential staff to undertake direct work with parents/carers along with the young people, which assist in improving outcomes for young people and their families.

There are staff whose previous work experience could be drawn upon, for example; staff have worked for the benefit agency which gives them a comprehensive understanding of that area which could assist young people and families trying to access benefits, they have worked in crèches which gives them an understanding of child development, which could be used to support young mothers.

## **Summary**

It is recognised that the level of care provided by the homes is of a consistent high standard, which is evidenced by CSSIW inspection reports. But from undertaking this exercise its clear that the qualifications, skills and experience of the residential staff could be developed to better support looked after children. By drawing on and developing staff skills further there is scope to offer a range of complementary services within and from a unit, for example:

- education on site
- counselling service
- mentoring/advocacy
- project work
- parenting classes
- preventative work
- outreach work with families and young people
- after care

If we are to continue to offer a high standard of residential care, then with a little creativity and investment in time and training, BCBC could provided an in-house provision which is currently sourced from outside the authority at a high cost. There is also scope to be more creative in how residential staff are utilised as a resource to provide an external supportive/preventative service.

**Appendix 1**

<b>Job Title</b>	<b>Qualified</b>	<b>Length of Service</b>
Residential Manager	Yes	32 yrs
Residential Manager	No	31 yrs
Residential Manager	Yes	19 yrs
Senior Residential Worker	Yes	20 yrs
Senior Residential Worker	No (seconded to the Social Work Degree)	5yrs 6months
Senior Residential Worker	Yes	14 yrs
Senior Residential Worker	No	1 month
Senior Residential Worker	No	15 yrs
Senior Residential Worker	Yes	10 yrs
Residential Worker	Yes	4yrs 8 months
Residential Worker	Yes	13yrs
Residential Worker (annualised)	Yes	5 yrs 6 months
Residential Worker	Yes	10yrs 6 months
Residential Worker	Yes	5yrs 6 months
Residential Worker	Yes	2yr 6 months
Residential Worker (annualised)	No	1 yr 4 months
Residential Worker	Yes	4yrs 9 months
Residential Worker	Yes	19 yrs
Residential Worker (annualised)	No	1yr 4 months
Residential Worker	Yes	6 years
Residential Worker	Yes	3 yrs
Residential Worker	Yes	17 yrs
Residential Worker	Yes	14 yrs
Residential Worker	Yes	8 yrs
Residential Worker	Yes	4 yrs 6 months
Residential Worker	Yes	8 yrs
Residential Worker	Yes	22 yrs
Residential Worker	Yes	3 yrs 6 months
Residential Worker	Yes	18 yrs
Residential Worker (annualised)	No	1 yr 2 months
Clerk		14yrs
Clerk		15 yrs
Clerk		2 yrs 8months

Karl Culpeck  
03/09





Annexe 5(i)



## RESIDENTIAL REVIEW REPORT

## YOUNG PEOPLE'S FEEDBACK

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## **Introduction**

During the first quarter of 2009 LEO @Tros Gynnal was asked to contribute to a review of the Cartrefle, Pant Morfa and Maesteg Community Homes in Bridgend by engaging with a sample of young people who had experienced a placement at some point in the last 3 years.

A questionnaire was devised to look at whether young people valued the services provided by the Residential Homes in Bridgend, what the homes do well, what they do less well and how they could be improved.

The review will also be taking in the views of the parents or carers of the young people, Social Workers and other professionals working with young people who experience the care system.

## **Methodology**

It was decided, given the nature of the questions to be asked, that 1:1 interviews with children and young people would be used rather than sending out questionnaires or setting up focus groups.

We contacted 31 young people and completed 20 responses, 11 with male and 9 with female respondents. Of those who did not respond, 6 chose not to be involved and 5 did not respond to letters. (No up to date telephone numbers had been provided, therefore we were unable to contact them by telephone.)

## **Summary of Findings**

We interviewed seven young people who were currently in residential placements in Bridgend, three who were in residential placements outside Bridgend, one who was currently living in foster care, three who were living independently, two who were currently in Parc Prison and four who had returned to live with family.

Of these young people, eighteen had been in more than one Local Authority care setting. Most young people could not remember how long they had stayed in the placements on each visit but, on their last or most current, none had been there for less than a week, 2 had been there for 1 – 4 weeks, 2 had been there 2 – 6 months, 1 had been there for 7-11 months, 4 had been there for about 2 years and 2 had been there for longer than this. This shows that the sample of young people chosen were a balance between those who had extensive experience and those who had significantly less.

65% of young people felt they had not been given a choice about the placement, 25% said they had been given a choice, 5% said they had been given a choice sometimes as they had been in several places, and 5% were unsure. Of those who had chosen to stay there, four said this was because it was better than where they were. Of those who felt they'd had no choice, some stated they would have preferred to stay with family or friends, some would have liked to live independently and one young person said they "wanted to stay in another foster home at the time but only because I didn't know what the Children's Home's would be like".

A huge 75% said they had been encouraged by staff to attend school, education or training. Many respondents explained that although they may not have attended school much of this was their decision and not from lack of encouragement from staff. Of the 25% who had not felt encouraged, one person said they "would be dropped off at the school but never once checked if I went in or what I did all day".

80% of the young people asked said the staff had supported them to get some help from other services. Many of them responded that they had received information about a variety of services. Some of the most positive responses included "the services I've used are all good." "The staff have encouraged me 100%" and "staff have been very helpful". One who was less enthusiastic about this said "I've asked for help with anger management but get told I don't need it & it won't help. I don't agree".

No less than 85% felt supported to access recreational or sporting activities with friends or staff members. Most said they had been offered one or two activities and several young people said they had been encouraged to do activities but had refused or didn't like what was on offer. Only 15% (three young people) said they had not been encouraged to do anything.

75% of young people felt safe, 60% felt listened to and 60% felt happy while at their placement. Some people who had experienced a variety of the homes

said that how they felt depended on the placement. One person said “I felt safe but my possessions were not” and another had said something similar adding “but the home would sort them out in the end”. One person said they felt happy sometimes and that no one would feel happy all the time.

Overall young people were quite positive about the support given to them from staff with only 30% saying they did not feel they received the right support from their key worker. 70% said that in general staff were supportive. 15% said some were supportive or ok and only 15% said that staff were not supportive. 75% felt they were helped to maintain and improve family relationships but 25% felt they were not.

A good proportion of young people felt they were being supported for when they moved on from their placement and, as many had actually moved on, they had experienced the benefit of this in practice.

The young people who has experienced time in Cartrefle had very positive comments. Of the

Young people that had experienced all settings, they made the observation that the homes catered for different ages and thus they expected to be treated differently in different settings. Several of the young people felt they should be afforded more freedom and objected to rules i.e. “A bit more freedom”, “I liked the freedom in the flat but I’d like to be allowed to come in later”, “Some staff can be too strict, would have liked more freedom.” An observation that was made on several occasions was that there should have been more broadband access which would have enabled coursework to be completed. One young person felt it was “the worst experience of my life” and another “scored it 1 because I can’t score it any lower.”

However, there was a lot of positive feedback on the staff with comments such as “I like the staff”, “ I like the staff, they are helpful”, “just liked it and was able to do activities and got on with all the staff”, “like everything” and “Cartrefle was awesome, the area, staff are nice, supportive.”

Asking young people what they would change about the homes and how they would go about it brought a huge variety of responses, however seven young people agreed they would change nothing or very little. One person who had moved on and was living independently responded “I would have improved my own behaviour but as far as the homes were concerned, everything was ok i.e. setting, placement, area etc”. Another thing that several young people mentioned here and as responses to other questions was the frustration with not having broadband internet access or more things to do to combat boredom. There were only 3 very negative responses to this question: 1 suggesting changing staff’s behaviour, one responding “everything” and 1 extreme response was they “would rather stay in a box on the street”. Despite this most responses were fairly reasonable and some quite personal e.g. would have liked more contact with family or increased pocket money.

## **Conclusion**

The young people we spoke to took time to think about each of the questions and gave time to consider their responses. This shows in the measured responses we had from them, with few being all good or all bad and most having a mixture depending on the question being asked.

Some questions around support, particularly support for school, education and training, were extremely positive as were their rating of the homes overall with 15 young people scoring the homes over with 5 points or above and no less than 5 scoring it 10 out of 10.

However, even those that were fairly negative about their stay in one of the Residential homes, had some positives regarding their time there. The greatest majority of young people had seen a lot of positive in their stays there and have valued the support and services accessed through their time in one or more of the homes. We were surprised about the strength of feelings from some young people who had experienced both foster care and residential care, who felt very strongly that they would prefer residential care over foster care. Their main reasons for this tended to be either that they had previously felt that they had to “fit in” with someone else’s family or that they felt the foster placements were unsettled and they had no control over them ending.

We can identify that 2 respondents who were very negative about residential care had found themselves in this setting for their first experience of local authority care and had stayed there for the shortest times. Those who had experience of residential care out of county, all but 1 commented that they would prefer to be closer to family and friends in Bridgend.

Lastly 13 young people said they felt that the homes were a good option for children and young people to live in, 5 said there were better options and 2 said they were unsure as they were not sure they knew enough about all the options.

Overall throughout the period of consultation, young people on the whole, seemed to have taken many positives from their stay in the residential care services and do value them.

## Data

### 1. Where are you living now?

Foster care (In house)	1
Independently	3
Parc Prison	2
Residential placement (Bridgend)	7
Residential Placement (Out of County)	3
With family	4
Grand Total	20

Other data needs adding here have a look at best way of doing it

### 2. Where were you before you came here/there (this or the last time)?

At home	1
Foster Care	8
Homeless	2
Other children's home (in BCBC)	5
Out of County children's home	2
Prison/youth offending unit	1
With other family/friends	1
Grand Total	20

18 had experienced other Local Authority care settings and 2 had no other experience.

### 3. Did you choose to stay there, were you given a choice?

Yes	5
No	13
D/K	1
Sometimes	1

#### If yes why?

- Because it was Pant Morfa or England
- Because it will help me towards independent living
- Better than where I was

- Living independently
- Only other choice was in Devon - too far away from family
- Sometimes they did sometimes they didn't
- Was in foster care and didn't like it - wanted to come back

**If no, where would you have liked to stay?**

Family / friends	5
Foster home	2
Other	2
Other children's home	2

**Why did you want to stay there?**

- Because I was fed up of moving to different places
- Because it was my mum
- Because they're family and I love them to pieces
- Because you earn privileges, more activities & people listened to you
- Foster Carers were really helpful and would do anything for you
- I didn't want to stay anywhere
- I was close to my family
- Rather have a flat on my own
- Wanted to stay in another foster home at the time but only because I didn't know what Children's Homes would be like
- Wanted to stay in Bridgend - this is too far from anyone I know
- Would have liked to go somewhere quieter
- Would have preferred it to going to strangers
- Wouldn't have known what the options were

**4. Have you been/were you encouraged or helped to go to school/education/ training when staying at the home?**

Yes	15
No	5



### Comments:

- Although in school now, didn't get the choice to go to preferred school
- As far as going to school is concerned they helped but not other things
- Got me out of bed and took me to and from school
- Had home tuition
- Help with expenses
- Helped with key skills, computer packages.
- I think that I have done very well in school
- I was encouraged but didn't like school and missed a lot
- If I was offered the help to go back to school I would definitely have gone but it wasn't offered
- I've been encouraged all the time. The staff are here to encourage you to be your best – you have to take what you can from life
- Left when I was 16 'cos I got bullied and didn't like going
- Not at all, would be dropped off at the school but never once checked if I went in or what I did all day
- Nothing at all in any of BCBC
- They'd wake you up, send you in taxi and pick you up
- Verbal encouragement but I didn't listen
- Was excluded from school and staff didn't help with anything else
- Was made to attend school - had no choice
- Yes it's part of the placement - if you don't they move you

### 5. Have/did staff support you to get help from any of the following?

Yes 16  
No 4

Service	No.
Child & Family	8
Youth Offending Team	7
Drugs/Alcohol	4
Befriending	1
Advocacy	7
Family Support	2
Youth Service	6
Anger management	2
Bridge Mentoring	4

### Comments:

- Have asked for help with anger management but get told I don't need it & it won't help. I don't agree.
- Helped with homework groups and stuff but not many people wanted to go.
- I didn't get any help for anything
- Never heard of befriending or advocacy
- None
- Only the youth service, no-one offered anything else
- Services were ok, kept me informed and updated
- Some weren't applicable but hadn't been told about the rest
- Staff don't listen to you. None of them it f....d your head up big time.
- Had a lot of belongings go missing. They'd wind you up, then blame you for playing up & making them restrain you.
- Staff have been very helpful
- The services I've used are all good. The staff have encouraged me 100%
- They provided information when needed
- Would definitely want full time training. Some people don't want help really, I want it. None of the children's homes mentioned anything about advocacy
- Youth worker would come and take me out 'cos I was bored all the time.

### Were you encouraged to access recreational/sporting activities on your own or with staff?

Yes	17
No	3

### Comments:

- Have to ask to do things you want - then people get information and permission – takes a couple of days for an answer
- Horse riding once a week with staff member but nothing else
- I go training with a member of staff, and I play pool with 2 members of staff. If we want to do anything, we just ask and if there's money we can.
- If I had been good I was taken to watch football matches or pool & stuff like that.
- None
- Not really interested in the things that are being offered
- Not really, went to gym once with staff member but only 'cos he wanted to go.
- Nothing - you've got to be joking!
- Nothing suitable - suggested activities-have no interest
- Pool, football anything that was available
- Sometimes - depending where I was staying at the time
- Sometimes and always with staff. Quad biking, fishing etc
- Swimming a lot, got us Bridge Cards which were stopped if they weren't used enough. Would offer staff support or to go on own or with friends
- Tried to get me interested/engaged in hobbies but at the time I wasn't ready to listen

- Went to karate and swimming club on my own
- With staff
- YOT expect me to get/keep out of trouble but they don't give you anything to keep you occupied. In Cartrefle I could do some sports.

### 6. Do/did you feel safe at your placement?

Yes	15
No	3
A little	1
No answer	1

### Do/did you feel listened to?

Yes	12
No	6
No answer	2

### Do/did you feel happy?

Yes	12
No	6
Sometimes	1
Blank	1

### Comments:

- Some staff listen but not all, some people don't take you seriously and treat you like kids" Happy but would like to move on
- Getting bullied all the time, by staff mostly. They'd wind me up & I'd kick off
- Got to do what I wanted and go out within reason, really nice staff
- They never listened
- I want to move but my Social Worker won't listen to me, she thinks it's the best place for me & only listens to adults points of view.
- In some I felt safe and listened to in others I wasn't. Never felt happy.
- It was great
- Left Pant Morfa & Cartrefle because of pressure from family members but wish I'd stayed there.
- Not all bad but very, very bad experience
- Rubbish there. Felt there were different rules for different people. Couldn't get access to internet to talk to friends etc. I felt safe there but felt my possessions were not.
- Staff listen to me - I feel I can talk to them about any problems
- Staff talk to you quite a lot. Between staff and young people, there is a nice environment
- Times when I felt my belongings were not safe but the home would sort them out in the end

**7. Are/were you getting the right support from your Key Worker?**

Yes	12
No	6
Sometimes	1
OK	1

**In general are/were staff supportive?**

Yes	14
No	3
In some	2
Ok	1

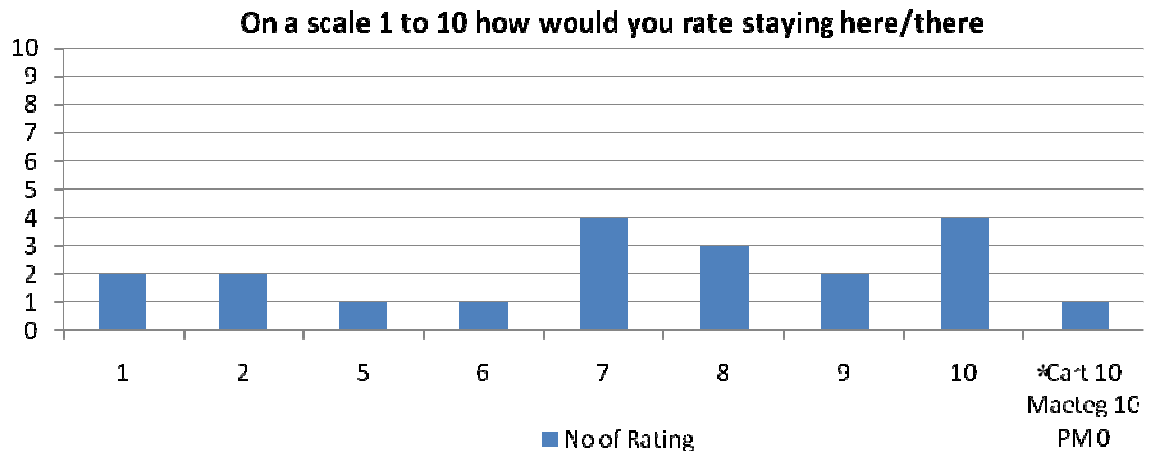
**8. Are/were you supported to improve family relationships and maintain contact with family members?**

Yes	15
No	5

**9. Are/were you being supported to prepare for when you leave here?**

Yes	11
No	7
Don't remember	2

10.



\* One young person chose to score all 3 homes as had experience of each

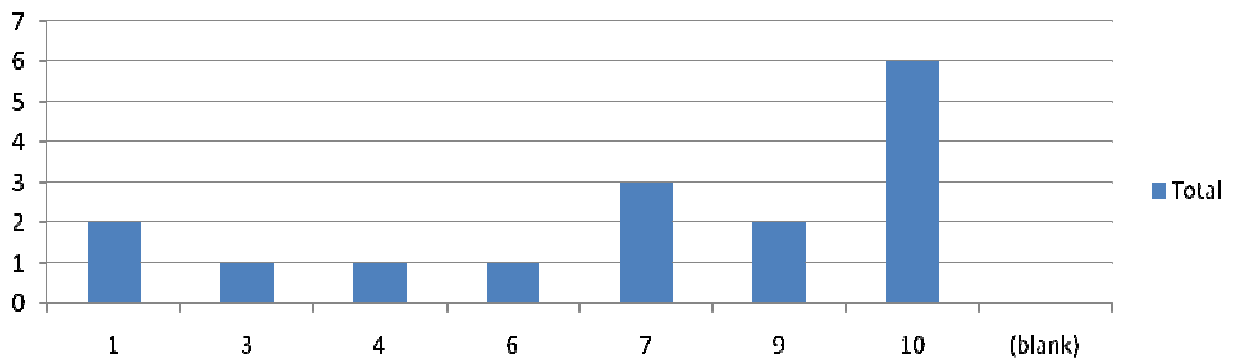
#### **Why did you score it that?**

- A bit more freedom - young people are older.
- Because I can't score it any lower. Not being listened to
- Cartrefle has such good members of staff. They're here 24-7 to support you no matter what.
- Cartrefle was Awesome. The area, staff are nice, supportive - Cartrefle much better than Pant Morfa. More freedom, it was awesome.
- 'Cos it was okay sometimes.
- Days are fun depending on staff - sometimes its good - sometimes its shit.
- Didn't have broadband internet and difficult to do coursework for school. Staff were friendly, gave lots of support and there were lots of activities
- Have to ask loads of time for 1 thing, nothing to do there and is boring
- I like the freedom in the flat, but I'd like to be allowed to come in later because I'd like to go clubbing
- I like the staff and most of the boys at the school
- I like the staff. They are helpful
- It is too far from home and I have struggles to get on with certain young people
- Just liked it and was able to do activities and got on with all the staff
- Like everything
- Liked being rewarded when good, learnt to behave better and independence
- Not set up properly. The staff don't interact with you. They don't listen to you & they don't support you.
- Rooms are shit in Pant Morfa much nicer in Cartrefle and Maesteg, they'd clean before you were put there. Ty Canal was cool too.
- Some staff can be too strict, would have liked more freedom

- Staff were nice and the other people staying there. Had everything I needed
- Worst experience of my life

11.

**On a Scale 1 to 10 how would rate staying here compared to other children/foster homes you might have stayed in?**



#### **Why do you say that?**

- Here is better because it felt uncomfortable in foster care - didn't like other people trying to treat me like their child
- Anywhere else is better than here
- Cartrefle is better because you can be more independent here and you're treated more like an adult. I didn't like being in foster care.
- Compared to foster care much better. In a Children's home you are all equal, in a foster home if they've got children, you've got to fit in. Maesteg Children's home felt more homely than foster care.
- Don't like either but foster care is a bit better. They talk to me more and ask me if I need anything. Feel foster carer's support me more, give lifts and a bit more on my side
- Foster care was more restricted. Here you can change decisions, for example if you're grounded in homes nobody can stop you going out
- Foster homes were okay but would have preferred to be with my family. Foster home was better than Somerset
- Generally better - nicer area
- I get on better with the staff and kids here. I like being here better than in Porthcawl. The building is nicer.
- It's hard to compare because Maesteg and Cartrefle are different age settings – each is good for each age. Each catered for my needs at the time.
- Much better than any of the others
- Pant Morfa had the strongest rules but looking back it was what was needed at the time. Wish I knew then what I know now. Learned a lot from the boundaries set at Pant Morfa.
- Previous foster placement was much better.
- Residential homes are much better. Time to get know the staff & felt softer than in foster home. Felt treated differently when in foster placement to their own kids
- Staff in English Residential homes are more interested in you. They listened to you and taught you basic skills such as cooking.
- This home has the less supportive system

- Ty Canal was better, nicer rooms
- You felt more listened to by the staff in Cartrefle

**12. If there was anything you could change, what would it be and how would you do it?**

- Change staff's behaviour & the way they don't give you the chance to learn life skills, then children wouldn't be running away all the time.
- Everything. Moving from this home could change everything. If my Social Worker & Key Worker listened to me things would be better.
- Get broadband internet access. More funding for things like internet access and Sky
- Get more staff and more equipment, new furniture and nicer surroundings to make it more homely. Get the internet
- Have a flat of my own as can look after self
- Having more to do and keeping other young people engaged so there is not a nasty atmosphere in the house on certain occasions
- How fairly kids here are treated sometimes, people not getting equal things
- I don't want to change anything
- I would like to see my mum more
- I'd have stayed in Cartrefle & want to get training to do Bricklaying
- I'd only change the time I've got to be in
- Nothing, everything seems to work
- Pocket money should be higher. I think you should get at least £14 per week.
- Would have improved my own behaviour but as far as the homes were concerned, everything was ok i.e. setting, placement, area.
- Would have stayed with mum
- Would rather stay in box on the street would be safer than here
- Wouldn't change anything
- Wouldn't have changed anything
- Wouldn't really change anything

**13. Lastly thinking about everything we have talked about today, would you say that overall residential homes are good places for children and young people to be able to live in or do you think there are other better options available?**

Yes, Good	13
No, other options better	5
Don't know	2

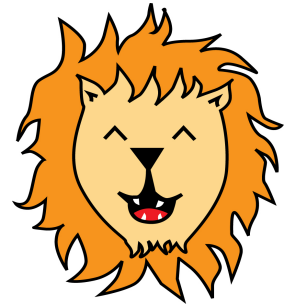
## 14. Summary

- Absolutely negative, would never ever want anyone to go through what I did. Everywhere I went was awful
- Absolutely negative. Give young people the chance to be heard. Listen to young people when they first come into care so they can come to some kind of agreement to stop young people running away
- Back at home now and relationships are much better
- Didn't feel they supported me to keep in touch with my nan as didn't give me lifts or money for the bus. Generally needs painting and brighter colours and make it more relaxing and more for young people to do
- Foster care isn't good enough for everyone and some people fit better in a children's home and they need this option.
- Generally positive
- Good - now in education and doing more than I was
- I like a residential home better than foster care because it's so hard to fit into somebody else's family, also I didn't like Merthyr Tydfyl. I like Cartrefle better than Pant Morfa because of more independent living.
- I prefer a residential home to a foster home because some foster placements want to replace your parents and they can't. You've only got one mum and dad. They want you to call them mum and dad and some punish you if you don't
- It changed me for the better. I was a little twat, it gave me independence and taught me how to stick to rules by rewarding good behaviour. The only help I've had since coming home is from mam & friend. Keeps in touch daily with one staff he's fantastic.
- It was okay but they could have done more and been more supportive. In general staff were supportive except for one of them. Was only allowed 50p per week for phone calls to family and this wasn't enough.
- Like this one best. Maesteg was more geared up for younger kids. Setting & area was ok but Pant Morfa is better for teenagers.
- Negative. Listen to me. Make me feel valued
- Pant Morfa is best but Morfa Street was okay. The staff did try to encourage me to improve family relationships but I didn't want to.
- Pant Morfa was good at the time. I've been happy in Cartrefle. Foster care didn't suit me.
- The home is not as supportive as it could be. Some staff are good others not so good.
- They shouldn't shut the kitchen after 11 pm.
- Training courses & help getting back into school. Would have liked help to learn how to read and write.
- Very much positive and happy!





Annexe 5(ii)

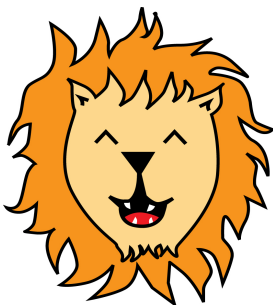


## RESIDENTIAL REVIEW REPORT

## PARENTS FEEDBACK

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## **Introduction**

During the first quarter of 2009 LEO @Tros Gynnal was asked to contribute to a review of the Cartrefle, Pant Morfa and Maesteg Community Homes in Bridgend by engaging with a sample of young people who had experienced a placement at some point in the last 3 years. In addition, we were asked to contact a parent, carer or guardian of the sample group of young people and get their views on the care provided.

A questionnaire was devised to look at whether parents valued the services provided by the Residential Homes in Bridgend, how well the homes worked with parents, what could be improved and how this form of care compares to others.

The review will also be taking in the views of the young people, Social Workers and other professionals working with young people who experience the care system.

## **Methodology**

It was decided, given the nature of the questions to be asked, that 1:1 interviews would be carried out with parents whose children were back at home and we were also visiting and 1:1 telephone interviews would be done with the parents of children who were still in residential care.

We contacted 31 parents or grandparents and completed only 13 responses. We contacted all potential participants by letter and also telephoned those we had received numbers for but a high proportion of telephone numbers were incorrect. Of those people contacted only by letter, none responded. Of those we did manage to contact 5 parents chose not to take part. We managed to contact the parents or grandparents of 7 male and 6 female young people who had experienced the residential care homes within Bridgend.

## **Summary of Findings**

The young people whose parents and grandparents took part in the review were now living in a variety of settings. 7 are currently living in residential care in Bridgend and 6 are either living independently, with family or with friends. We did not receive feedback from any parents whose children are currently living in residential care out of county.

The parents and grandparents we interviewed indicated, on the whole, that their family had been in contact with Social Services for some time before their child was placed in care. This ranged from 6-7 months to over 12 years but most had been for several years. This was quite negative for many and some felt they had been asking for help for some time before their children were placed. Most felt they had asked for help but did not want their children to be taken into care and other help would have been more appropriate.

None of the parents felt they had been consulted about where their child was placed before going into one of the residential homes. However, 38% said they had received some information about the home, 30% said they were invited to visit it, 30% said they felt their opinions were listened to but only 15% said they were invited to a pre placement meeting. Of the 13, 4 were very happy with the placement at this time, 1 saying it, "was outstanding in Cartrefle – couldn't do enough for us. Kept me informed at all times. Couldn't wish for better staff"; 5 people were negative, 3 saying this was because they didn't really feel listened to, and 2 said it was because their children were split up going into care or because they had to move several times; Some people were neutral at this point.

When asked about contact, most parents felt they could visit or telephone whenever they wanted and some said they did not visit the homes much as their child comes to their home for contact or calls them regularly. A few people did have some issues saying, "the distance was a problem, couldn't afford to visit" and "could have phoned but it was too expensive".

9 of the respondents said the care provided to their child whilst at one of the residential homes was either excellent or good. Only 2 felt the care was poor or very poor, 1 said it was ok and 1 said they didn't know.

Some of the comments made by those who felt the care was excellent or good were: "they couldn't have done more. Really helpful & felt more like a family than people doing a job", "they'd invite the whole family for tea when he lived there and we were made to feel very welcome". Most agreeing that they were kept well informed about their child – especially when they absconded or were in trouble and that appropriate boundaries were set with rewards for good behaviour.

Some of the comments made by those who said the care was ok, poor or very poor were: "She wasn't taught any life skills, I never knew what was going on",

“learning bad behaviour from other young people in care” “staff too lenient about the care”. Most of these agreeing they were either not kept informed or only kept informed sometimes. However some of these also commented that some things were better than others e.g one person said although they were not kept informed, the home, “did have a homely feel”, and another did say “did home work well” and staff were “sort of helpful”.

Again the majority of parents, 9 in total, said their child had been helped or encouraged to attend school, education or training, with only 2 people saying they felt they were not helped or encouraged and 2 people saying they didn't know. A high proportion said their child benefited from the help and support and only went to school because of the lifts, rewards and encouragement received from the staff. Some parents commented that the staff did “everything they could” to get their child to school and couldn't be blamed if their child did not stay there or refused to engage with education. 1 person did say that when their child was excluded from school she “isn't punished at all”.

Parents seems to feel their children had accessed a large range of services throughout Bridgend, with the highest number indicating their child had received services from Child & Family, Youth Services and the Youth Offending Team. Two people commented that they weren't sure if their child was given any information about services. Most parents who commented felt their children had at least been given information, some saying their child engaged with the services, others said they had not engaged but had received the information.

8 parents said that the time their child spent in Maesteg, Cartrefle or Pant Morfa was a positive experience for their child and 5 felt it wasn't. Of the 8 who felt it was positive, only 5 said they felt something had changed for the better since their child had been in one of the homes, 7 overall felt nothing had changed for the better and 1 was unsure.

When asked about what outcomes have been achieved and how their child's behaviour had changed there were varying responses. Several people felt their child had “grown up” and were happier about following rules and boundaries with increased social skills and an improvement in their relationships. 1 person mentioned “he hasn't been in trouble with the police” and another that their son had been encouraged to make new friends enabling him to keep out of trouble. Those who felt less positive said they felt it was the wrong placement, their child learnt bad behaviours, had not been encouraged to develop life skills or they couldn't do much as, “ she kept running away”.

Overall most parents (9) felt residential care was a better option for their child than foster care, 2 felt it wasn't and 2 did not answer. Some of the positive reasons listed were that foster care placements were not considered stable enough, that residential staff had more training and were “more able to cope”, that the children would run away from foster placements, that they were treated differently to the foster carers natural children and that “they didn't feel staff were just doing a job, they really cared”. The negative comments were

that, “if she had gone to a foster placement straight away she wouldn’t have had the opportunity to learn things off others. Now the damage is done”, and if they had gone to a foster home closer to family home, contact would have been better.

When asked how the experience of the homes compared to other types of care settings, 4 said it was much better, 4 said it was about the same, 1 said it was a little worse and 2 said they were unsure. Those who felt it was better commented “the staff are excellent”, they felt very welcome, “the environment is homely” and “it was stable” as reasons. Some said, “it wasn’t much different” and “all as bad as each other” and some commented on the lack of “ground rules” in the home and lack of life skills development.

Some of the suggestions for improving things were, increased communication with parents, better staffing ratio so they can enforce “rules” and improve respect for staff, make the settings closer to family homes to improve contact and the need for a new system for children aged 17 plus to prepare them for leaving care. Many comments were to change nothing as they are already “doing everything they can”.

When asked if residential homes are a good option for young people to live, 4 people said yes good, 7 said no - other options are better and 1 said they didn’t know. There was a wide range of reasons for this. Some people said that although it had been a good option for their child, there may be better options for other young people. Some felt the staff were key to supporting their child, some suggested that more support be given to parents to have their children living at home. Some people also said “there’s no better options. Can’t fault it” and “nowhere better”.

## **Conclusion**

Initially most parents felt that their views on where their children should be placed had not been taken into consideration and that usually this hadn’t been the help they had been asking for. However, once placed in the residential settings it was overwhelmingly seen as the best option for most young people with very few parents stating that foster care would have been a better option. It was generally felt that the staff in residential settings were better vetted than foster carers. One person however felt that if a home is an “all girl environment, it should have been all female staff” and another stated “much better than foster care because the staff are trained on how to handle all kinds of situations. It’s brilliant, fantastic!”

Most parents felt they were kept well informed and were encouraged to keep in regular contact with their children, whether by visiting or by telephone. Most felt that their child was encouraged to attend school and several parents recognised that it was the children themselves that were to blame if they didn’t engage in education and it wasn’t for the lack of support on behalf of the staff. However, poor staff ratios were picked up on several times and it was felt that

more resources should be put in place to enable staff to be more effective in their roles.

Not one person felt that Out of County placements were beneficial as they felt that the young person would run away from any setting that they weren't happy in regardless of distance. This would then put the young person more at risk than if they ran away from a local residential home.

## Data

### Where is your child currently living?

Cartrefle	3
Maesteg	1
Other	6
Pant	
Morfa	3

### 1. How long were you in contact with social services prior to your child being accommodated?

- 12 months, they came to help with elder son
- 4 years
- A few years but not sure
- About 2 years or so
- At least 12 years. It was a waste of time. Had no support at all from SS
- Eleven years at last. If SS had done their job properly she wouldn't be in care. I asked for help and it was thrown back in face
- In touch with them for a good couple of months. Didn't give me the help I asked for and got taken off me. Would never have gone to them for help if I'd known I was going to lose them
- months / good couple of years
- My mother was since XXXX, 5 years on and off
- Phoned SS for help and it took 4 years before the children were accommodated
- XXXXX was living on the street, taking drugs etc 6-7 months of nagging social services for help. In the end I had to threaten them that if anything happened to my son, I would hold them responsible.
- Two boys were involved before she was born, for years
- Wasn't. Asked for help with 2 sons but came and took all children

### 2. Were you consulted about where your child was placed Maesteg/Cartrefle/Pant Morfa?

Yes            0            No            13

	Yes	No
Were you given information about the home?	5	8
Were you invited to visit?	4	9
Were you invited to a pre-placement meeting?	2	11
Do you feel your opinions were listened to?	4	7



**Comments:**

- Didn't even know for first week where she was. When she went to Maesteg best move ever
- Emergency admission
- He was only there a week then he went to Cartrefle. Outstanding in Cartrefle - couldn't do enough for us. Kept me informed at all times. Couldn't wish for better staff especially Martine.
- If she wanted to go there you'd back her up. Everything you ask seems to have been answered honestly
- In Pant Morfa they were listened to
- Kept in the dark about everything
- Listened to sometimes but not really
- Not all the time
- Only to go home for respite and have been to Maesteg and Pant Morfa
- Originally said she was going to foster care initially and then Pant Morfa
- Wanted all children to stay together and not split up but this didn't happen
- Went to Pant Morfa as emergency then got pushed from pillar to post. Asked for respite but was refused which escalated to her going into care permanently

3. **How often do / did you visit your child in Maesteg/Cartrefle/Pant Morfa? *If only just been placed there, how often do you think you will visit them. Please state which type of contact.***

**Mark if intention or actual:**

	Intentional	Actual
Only been once	2	1
Once a week +	2	3
Once a fortnight		
Once a month		1
Every 2 - 3 mths		
Twice a year		
Once a year		
Never		1

**Comments:**

- Been there once and was given a cup of tea. She visits me.
- By choice, not mobile so difficult to get out of the house.
- Could have gone whenever I wanted to. Contact was supervised initially for a couple of weeks, then unsupervised
- He visits the family home all the time
- He's brought to me once a week as well. Was having overnights but this has stopped
- See her whenever I want

- The distance was a problem, couldn't afford to visit. Not being informed when there were problems.
- The staff take her to and from contact and provide all support necessary
- Whenever he wants to see them he phones. That doesn't happen very often as he's at the age when he wants to be with his friends
- Whenever wanted to see each other
- You were able to visit each other whenever wanted

4. **How often do you have contact other than visiting the home e.g. telephone contact?**

Daily	5
Weekly	
Monthly	
Other	5
None	

If other please state:

- As often as we wanted
- Can phone whenever want to
- Could have phoned but was too expensive
- No restrictions
- Sometimes twice a day, there was no limit
- Tues & Thurs tea. Sat a.m. till Sunday p.m.
- Were able to speak as often as we wanted
- When he's got time
- Whenever he wants/chooses to
- Whenever want to
- Whenever we want

5. **What do you think about the care provided for your child? Overall would you say it is:**

Excellent	6
Good	3
OK	1
Poor	1
Very poor	1
DK	1

**Comments:**

- Appropriate boundaries & rewards. They couldn't have done more. Really helpful & felt more like a family than people doing a job. They kept the family informed about

everything even if seemed trivial. Couldn't ask for better.

- helped ? Whatever happened they kept me informed. Kept in touch and remain friends. They'd invite the whole family for tea when he lived there and made to feel very welcome. Set boundaries. Home worked well. Staff were helpful. Homely feel to home. Kept informed at all times
- It wasn't appropriate that she was placed out of county. She was being restrained which is wrong, better off letting her cool down on her own. Even in Bridgend there was no help or guidance. She wasn't taught any life skills. I never knew what was going on. No boundaries. Didn't work well with me/child. Didn't keep me informed about anything. Care given to my child was rubbish. Did have a homely feel. Absolutely didn't keep me informed about my child
- XXXX settled in very well, loves his own room. Providing better help than when he goes to XXXXX. Would prefer if he could stay at Cartrefle. Don't think that moving will be beneficial.
- Most foster parents have been poor as they're not interested in the boys. Don't treat the boys equally. Not able to comment on "the homes" as they only go there now and again for respite
- Not always kept informed. Set boundaries and good behaviour. Home didn't work well all the time. Staff were helpful. Homely feel - OK.
- Now that XXXX in Maesteg it's fantastic. Can't say a bad word about anything, staff, home, bedrooms - its brilliant. Ring me every day and keep me informed of things at all times. Boundaries - yes, try really hard. Work well - brilliant, absolutely marvellous. Helpful - everyone of them. Care - fantastic, couldn't ask for better. Homely feel - its lovely. Informed about child - always
- Staff did set boundaries and promote good behaviour, worked with us well, were helpful, it was homely and was kept informed. Don't involve me if only permission is needed for outings. If he goes missing I am kept informed.
- Staff try to set boundaries and work with us pretty well. It had a homely feel. Whenever anything bad happened we were informed straight away. Staff did their best
- They always keep in touch and let you know straight away if there are any problems or if she's in trouble
- Try to set boundaries and work. Feels comfortable
- Was allowed to do whatever she wanted, didn't seem to be any supervision. I didn't get on with the staff and fell out with most of them. Felt they should have had more control over my daughter through the court order
- With regard to being notified when she absconded Maesteg and Pant Morfa they always let me know. Foster homes didn't keep us informed. Has sanctions if not cleaning her room etc. Only punishment is to withhold pocket money. This only makes her steal. They don't take things they want off them i.e. hi fi, make up TV etc. Learning bad behaviour off other YP while in care, being in residential has shown her how to get hold of "blow and speed" and is now using both. Set boundaries and promote good behaviour - some things. Did home work well - keep informed. Staff were sort of helpful, but don't listen to suggestions of how to handle them. Staff too lenient about the care. Children are spoilt and allowed to get away with murder.
- Kept informed about my child.

6. **Do you feel your child has been helped or encouraged to attend school/education/training since they've been at Maesteg/Cartrefle/Pant Morfa?**

Yes	9
No	2
Don't know	2

**Comments:**

- Didn't attend school as she was getting bullied
- Encouraged to start XX or XX, had an interview and starts soon. She wouldn't have done this if the staff hadn't persuaded her
- Had a driver to take him to school but his lifts have stopped. He says he wants to go on his own but then says he wants lifts
- He didn't engage but it wasn't for the lack of the staff trying. They did everything they could.
- He wouldn't have gone without support and encouragement
- He's dyslexic, the staff did what they could but feel it's breaking up now that he's getting older.
- School transport is provided
- She didn't have the confidence to mix after being in XXXXXXXX, put in big school Not any good for her
- Staff tried everything, getting her up and setting reward for getting up. Try really hard to motivate her
- They tried their best to get him to school, took him there every day but he'd choose not to stay there.
- they try but she knows that she'll get excluded for the slightest little things. When excluded she is allowed lie-ins and isn't punished at all
- They're brilliant. They do everything they can and can't be blamed if she doesn't engage
- Wasn't in school - excluded at time

7. **And how about other agencies and services - have they been supported or encouraged to attend or get help about....**

	Yes	No	N/A / DK
Child & Family	7	1	3
Befriending	1	4	6
Youth Services	7	2	2
Youth Offending Team	7	1	3
Advocacy	3	4	5
Anger Management	5	3	3
Drugs/Alcohol	6	1	4
Family Support	6	1	4
Bridge Mentoring	3	3	5

**Comments:**

- All that you needed, Cartrefle gave us information about anything we needed. They couldn't have done more.
- Don't think she was told of any of the above. She kept running away from home to be with me
- Encouraged to be involved with wide ranges of services
- Gave what was needed in circumstances
- He is given advice about everything. He needs all of the above.
- He's been offered most things that might help.
- Not sure what he's been offered but know he had help with drug/alcohol
- Pant Morfa provided transport for visits with mum
- Researched everything in Bridgend area. Encouraged her to get involved with stuff to keep her occupied. Take her swimming. Couldn't do any more than they do.
- She talks of things she's been told about but can't remember what they are
- Trying to give him help where it's needed. He asked me lots of questions about drugs but I don't know of anyone if giving him any info. I try to be open and honest
- Wasn't given anything that I know of

8. **So overall, do / did you feel that the time in Maesteg/Cartrefle/Pant Morfa has been a positive experience for <your child>?**

Yes	8
No	5

9. **And do you feel that anything has changed for the better since <your child> has been there?**

Yes	5
No	7
D/K	1

**Comments:**

Has anything positive come out of the experience? What outcomes have been achieved? Why do you say that? Can you give me examples of how their behaviour has changed?

- Before he went to Cartrefle he was living rough, taking drugs etc. Since Cartrefle he got away from the crowd he was mixing with & was supported to stay away from them and make new friends.
- Early days, he hasn't changed in his ways but that's his choice
- Grown up . Relationship with me better. Pays more attention to rules. Hasn't been in trouble with the police
- Had more choices. Done "Yellow Wales, Princes Trust." Couldn't have done it without

- staff's support. They've done a good job, his view on life is improved
- Have learned lots of bad things she wouldn't have if she'd been in a private foster home. She now has no respect for any staff members. Hasn't been made to do own washing, cooking, cleaning or anything.
  - He's back home, relationship is much better. Learnt his lesson and learned how to behave. Now more accepting of rules and boundaries and this was learnt at Pant Morfa
  - It wasn't the right setting for him. Felt he benefitted more from XXXXXX but that may also have been him maturing
  - It's been so long since he's been in care that you've lost routine especially now that overnight stays have stopped. Foster carers have brought him up so I can't really compare
  - No. She kept running away as she was so unhappy.
  - Positive, her relationship skills have got a little bit better. They're trying their best but only so far they can go. Negative - her attitude is still the same.
  - She knows she can't get away with murder. Boundaries are being put in place and sanctions. She's much more accepting of rules now
  - She seems to have grown up and you've seen an improvement generally in her attitude
  - She's back home and that's all that matters

**10. Do you think that foster care would have been a better option instead of going into Maesteg/Cartrefle/Pant Morfa?**

Yes 2 No 9

**(If appropriate) Do you think that continuing in foster care would have been a better option instead of going into Maesteg/Cartrefle/Pant Morfa?**

Yes No 3

**Comments:**

**Why do you say that?**

- Because Cartrefle was like a family & they supported him all the way. It was like a family & all siblings were made to feel welcome. We didn't feel the staff were just doing a job they really cared.
- Because she may have been moved and that wouldn't have done her any good.
- Foster carers are not given appropriate training. Local Authority are not putting the right people for right child. Checks are done but they're not thorough enough. Mistakes are made that shouldn't ever happen
- He didn't get the care he should have had whilst in foster care. Much better looked after in Pant Morfa. Always ensured he had clean clothes and was well fed and always kept informed of everything - good or bad
- He works better on a 1:1 basis, not too good around other Yps
- He would have run away
- If she'd gone to foster placement straight away she wouldn't have had the opportunity to learn things off others. It's now too late, the damage has been done

- If she'd stayed in a foster home near the family, contact would have been better. Couldn't afford to visit or phone
- Is in foster care. When on respite for a couple of days he says he prefers it to being with family as they go out on trips. But if there for more than a week he gets bored and wants to go back to carers
- She ran away from every foster home she went to
- She's tried foster care and it didn't work. It's better here because the staff are trained to deal with her
- Tried it but didn't work. He could see treatment the family's natural children was getting differed from his and this caused resentment. In Cartrefle everyone is equal and from similar backgrounds.
- Went to foster care but he abuses it. He tried a couple of placements but the staff are more able to cope in a residential settings.

**11. So, taking everything into consideration, how would you rate (Maesteg/Cartrefle/Pant Morfa?)**

Excellent	4
Good	6
OK	0
Poor	1
Very poor	1
Don't know/na	1

**a) If excellent/good/OK**

**Why do you say that? What do / did you/your child particularly like about it?**

**(PROBE if necessary)**

- Because of staff encouraging her to take up training but it is early days, as she's only been there a short while
- Excellent for staff but good for XXXX (child)
- He was given rules and grew up a lot
- Much better than any foster home. More appropriate for his needs
- She's getting what she needs from the staff and if it wasn't for Maesteg, XXXX wouldn't be here now and wouldn't be seeing her. Can't praise Maesteg enough.
- Staff are brilliant - especially his support worker. Can't say enough about them
- Staff are pretty good but system is terrible. The kids can demand new clothes whenever they want. Staff are not able to uphold strict rules
- Staff brilliant. Everything is clean. Was allowed to see room. He calmed down a lot whilst in there. He like the independence and rules.
- Staff made it, kept informed all the time. Couldn't have done any more for any of the family.
- Staff's input

**b) If OK/Poor/Very Poor**

**Why do you say that? What does / did you/your child particularly dislike about it?**

- Never has any contact with us when he's on respite
- Not enough supervision or boundaries. She was allowed to do whatever she wanted and staff just said they couldn't force her to do anything
- Not knowing what was going on and only finding out about things after the event. Only let me know when they thought I could calm her down
- System is poor as staff can't make the YP do what they are told

**(UNLESS FIRST EXPERIENCE OF LA CARE) ASK:**

**12. How does / did your child being there compare to your other experiences of local authority care? Is it better there, worse, or about the same?**

**Is that - much better / much worse...?**

(If necessary, compare separately to other types of care setting - e.g. is it better/worse than Foster Care, is it better/worse than other Children's Home etc)

Much better	4
A little better	0
About the same	4
A little worse	1
A lot worse	0
Don't know/na	2

**a) If better:**

**Why do you say that? What is better about it?**

- All as bad as each other
- Because the staff are excellent. They go out of their way to do whatever they can.
- Because the staff are great. Can't say a bad word about them. The setting is excellent, very homely.
- It wasn't much different, the staff were good there too
- Other settings experienced were more homely. Atmosphere a lot more relaxed in other setting, felt more at home
- Pant Morfa never made you feel welcome, felt as if we were watched - no privacy. Never allowed to go to son's room. Had to wait in hallway when visiting. If we phoned to ask anything we were told that the staff would ring us and made us feel we had no right to ring up.
- She didn't like the uncertainty of not knowing how long the placement would be for`
- Staff are good but they can't enforce any rules. YP thinks she'll get own flat when 16 and no one can stop her. Even if that was true she hasn't been taught any life skills i.e. if she wants clean clothes she just drops them in the kitchen and they're washed, dried and



ironed for her. She's not even made to keep her room clean. if in a foster home it would be easier to ensure "ground rules"

- Terrible experience of foster care. Would have killed herself if she had to go back. Fantastic staff. Fantastic home. Couldn't be better

**b) If worse:**

**Why do you say that? What is worse about it?**

- In Pant Morfa never felt welcome and always felt as if we had no rights. It felt like the staff were only there because they had a job to do and not because they wanted to or cared about the youngsters.
- Staff don't have the manpower to get YP to do chores so they do everything themselves. This does not give the YP preparation for living independently

**13. Could anything different be done to make the experience better for the young people living there?**

Yes	4
No	7
Don't know/na	1

**Please Comment:**

- Could have been more communication between all parties
- Couldn't ask for any more
- Couldn't do more - absolutely outstanding staff at Cartrefle. If anyone had to go into care I would recommend Cartrefle a million percent.
- Discipline but they're doing as much as they can with XXXX
- Doing everything they can. Don't think anything different could be done
- Doing everything they can. Can't speak highly enough.
- If the staff could enforce rules they might get more respect. Better staff ratio.
- Keep them in settings closer to home so that visiting is easier. Make it easier to keep in touch and let me know what's going on
- Once children have been under the care system you're treated like "shit" not enough boundaries. She wasn't safe as they didn't know where she was half the time
- They do everything they can to help. They're brilliant. They couldn't do any more if they tried.
- Think they need a new system for age 17 and over. New way of preparing for leaving care. New things to keep the YP occupied
- Tried their best for him

**14. Lastly, thinking about everything we have talked about today, would you say that overall (Maesteg/Cartrefle/Pant Morfa) is a good place for children and young people to be able to live in, or do you think there are other better options available?**

Yes, Good	4	
No, other options better		7
Don't know	1	

## Comments - why do you say that

- Can't see that they'll find any better places. They'll phone you whenever anything good or bad happens. Always know what's going on. Staff support is always there any time of day or night
- Depends on situation and child. For my child it's worked, for others foster care may be better.
- Had PR but it didn't count for anything. She should have been closer to home
- If he'd gone to foster home he made it quite clear he'd have run away
- If it hadn't been for Cartrefle & their staff my son wouldn't be here today. He tried to take his life & the staff were there for him and the family 24 / 7 - never leaving his side and allowing us parents to be with him as much as he wanted. They were like family, not like staff.
- If it works for XXX It can work for anyone. Tried foster care and it didn't work but might for others
- In this case a foster home with no other Yps so that "bad habits" couldn't be picked up. Would never go to SS again as they are useless
- In this case there's no better option because of his behaviour & residential setting is much better able to cope.
- In my case foster placement would have been better
- Support for parents to be able to care for their children at home. Supervision if necessary
- There's not better options. Can't fault it.
- This is the best place. There's no place better. If it was to happen to anyone I'd thoroughly recommend Maesteg. There's nowhere better.

## Summary

**Summarise with parent/carer what their overall experience of the Children's Home has been (positive/negative), in relation to other care settings where possible and how their child's experience could have been made better.**

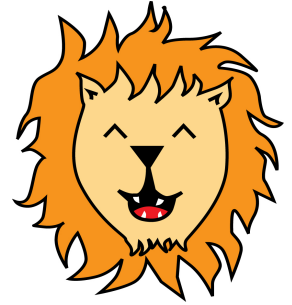
- All she wanted was to be allowed home with her mother. I had made mistakes in the past but would have loved to have been given the chance to have looked after her myself
- Best place ever. Foster placements are not checked enough and the staff in Maesteg are superb
- Better than anywhere else he's been, nothing could be done any differently. Can't speak highly enough of the staff.
- Cartrefle goes over and above what they need to do. You feel they do their job because they want to, not because they get paid to do it.
- I can go and see her whenever I want. Overall they have done the best they can with her but do feel they should move her on now
- Not really negative but not as homely as other settings
- Positive experience. Think she's in the best place.
- Positive, haven't got a bad word to say about Pant Morfa. Had more support from staff at Pant Morfa than he ever had from social worker
- She is very easily led. She's an instigator but not a leader. She's learnt worse behaviour and is not safe, as she's allowed to stay out overnight in different boys

houses. She has no respect for staff and thinks she can get away with murder – usually because she does!

- They just "chuck" the kids in whichever home there's space in at the time for respite
- This was the best option for him but he choose not to stay
- Very bad experience, had joint PR but weren't given the chance to use it. In an all girl environment it should have been all female staff
- Would recommend this to anyone who had to go into a home. Much better than foster care because the staff are trained on how to handle all kinds of situations. It's brilliant, fantastic



Annexe 5(iii)

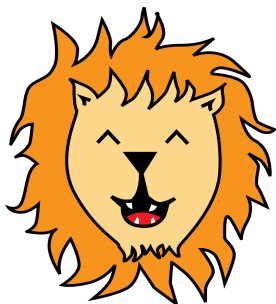


## RESIDENTIAL REVIEW REPORT

## STAKEHOLDERS FEEDBACK

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## **Introduction**

During the first quarter of 2009 LEO @Tros Gynnal was asked to contribute to a review of the Cartrefle, Pant Morfa and Maesteg Community Homes in Bridgend by reporting back how, Social Workers, Education Professionals and other professionals involved with children and young people who may be in care, feel about the services provided.

A questionnaire was devised to look at whether the professionals valued the services provided by the Residential Homes in Bridgend, what the homes do well, what they do less, how they could be improved and what were the services that the Local Authority should prioritise in the future.

The review will also be taking in the views of young people who had experienced a placement in one of the homes over the past 3 years and their parents or carers.

## **Methodology**

Two questionnaires were devised, one to be sent to Social Workers currently working for the Local Authority also seen as Stakeholders as they may have had the responsibility to find placements for young people. The second questionnaire was very similar but some questions differed as they were sent to professionals in education, health, Youth Offending Team, Police and a variety of voluntary organisations.

Questionnaires were sent in the first instance by e-mail and those for Professionals groups were reminded by post. All respondents were asked to return their questionnaires to LEO @ Tros Gynnal to remain confidential and responses were to be included in this report.

63 Stakeholder Social Workers were sent the questionnaire and we received 11 replies. 17 Consultation Education Groups and 11 professional organisations were sent the questionnaires and we received 14 replies from this group, 3 saying they felt unable to complete the questionnaire and 11 completed forms.

Many of the forms from this group that we did receive were only partly completed.

## **Summary of Findings**

The Stakeholder questionnaires that were returned to us, were from the following employees:

- 4 Team Managers
- 3 Social Workers
- 1 Fostering Recruitment Project manager
- 1 Independent Reviewing Officer
- 2 Senior Practitioners

The Professionals group that returned questionnaires to us, were from the following employees:

- 1 Acting Educational Psychologist
- 2 Head teachers
- 1 Assistant Head teacher
- 1 Teacher
- 1 Early Years Advisor
- 1 Police Sergeant
- 1 Probation Officer
- 1 Youth Justice Worker
- 2 Social Workers

15 of the 22 respondents had worked with a young person in Residential Care in the last 3 years. 20 had visited at least one of the homes, with 14 having visited 2 or 3 of them.

Of the 22 people 21 were aware of the Statement of Purpose, Inspection Report and Annual Report but only 12 people had read them. Only Stakeholder Social Workers were asked if reading the documents had helped to assist in the understanding of the services provided and aided in making an appropriate placement. 4 of them replied yes, 3 felt no and 1 was unaware of the documents anyway. However 1 who felt it hadn't aided placement said this was because they were aware of services provided anyway so had not added to it.

When asked if the placement had benefitted the child/ children they were involved with, the majority of respondents, (13), said yes and only 3 said no, and 5 said they could not comment. Those saying it was positive experience, stressed the placement provided stability, safety and excellent preparation for independence. The negative comments were around the mixture of young people and more impressionable people being influenced by others.

17 respondents said they had attended a planning meeting or review for the child / young person they were involved with, 1 had not and 4 felt it would not have been appropriate. Those who had attended were all very positive about

the experience and felt it aided good communication and provided excellent planning for young people.

Stakeholders were asked if the residential placement was the first choice of placement. Those saying it was the first choice said it depended on the child. One reason was because the young person didn't want to be part of another family. Those saying it wasn't the first choice of placement all said a foster placement would have been the first choice. The reasons given for this not being possible were, breakdown of previous placements, young persons choice, or as an emergency.

When asked if the setting was suitable for the young person they were involved with, 12 said yes and only 3 said no. Of those answering positively, some of the reasons given were the safety and security of the homes, stability, welcoming homely feel of the home and staff management of challenging behaviour. One person who felt it had not benefitted the young person suggested this was due to the mix of other young people at the home.

When asked if they felt the Residential Service worked in partnership with them, 17 said yes, no-one said no and 4 people felt this was not applicable. There was a variety of reasons given for the overwhelming positive answers to this question, most of which seem to suggest that the communication between the homes and themselves were excellent. E.g "there is always good communication between community home staff and myself". One person felt there was a lack of understanding between residential staff and fieldwork staff about each others roles, but this person went on to say how they had improved this and how positive the relationship between them is now.

Those consulted were given a list of 19 services/needs provided by Residential Services and were asked to say if they felt these services were provided and the needs met, (please see comprehensive list given in data section). The majority of respondents felt they did provide a huge range of services with some being unsure about whether some services were provided and very few feeling certain services were not actually provided. There was most confusion around the following:

- Direct work with families – 2 said no and 7 said they didn't know
- Counselling and advising around drugs / alcohol / sex education – 1 said no and 7 said they didn't know.
- Reducing AWA / missing – 2 said no and 6 said didn't know.
- Reducing offending – 4 said no and 6 said they didn't know.

Although people were asked if the homes provided advocacy, there was not a box on the form sent with the Stakeholders questionnaire so this was artificially low with 9 people saying yes, 1 saying no and 3 saying they didn't know.

When asked what the homes do well there was a wide range of responses. Many talked about good communication, safety and security for young people. One suggests that as the young people there tend to be older they "do not



want substitute parents” and staffing being well skilled, working well with agencies amongst other positives.

There was quite an overall negative response to questions about staffing levels. None of the respondents felt the staffing levels were good, 10 people felt the staffing levels were adequate, 3 said they were inadequate and 5 were unsure. Some of the reasons given were that sometimes only 1 member of staff is available to support young people and this impacts on their ability to provide a service. One person commented “they are restricted from being able to provide sufficient 1:1 “.

When asked about staff training and skills mix there was a varied response with some people feeling they didn’t know enough about this to comment, some suggesting the training levels vary with experience and some suggesting that more specialist training is provided.

Some of the suggestions to improve the service were, provide more specialised training, have ongoing assessment of the appropriateness of placement, more attention given to the mix of young people, decorating, more independent living flats similar to the one in Cartrefle and that, “staff need to be helped to remain fresh and receptive to new ideas”.

On the whole, respondents felt the quality of the services provided was good, (12) or excellent (3), and not one person felt it was poor.

Those consulted were asked what would strengthen support for children in residential care, what their agency could do to support this and what could other agencies do to support it. Some of the responses were: Communication is good but can always be improved; it’s already good as it is; increase resources particularly around leaving care and preparing for independence; increase Social workers time with young people in homes; improved links with CAMHS, educational support and substance misuse; more admin support for social workers to free up time; Agencies to prioritise young people from the homes and give them a fast track to services; more support from schools; ensure all agencies understand one another roles.

When asked about who the services should be provided for in the future, most said for those aged over 10 years, with a variety of complex needs, those experiencing a number of placement breakdowns, engaging in criminal activity and challenging behaviours.

When asked if they homes are currently I the correct location, 11 said yes, 2 no, 2 didn’t know and 7 didn’t answer. Several felt a more rural setting would be positive.

When given a list of potential models of service and asked which Bridgend should prioritise for the future, the following was how it was scored:

- Independent living with intensive/task focused work with input from careers, social housing and benefits agency. **28 points**

- Individual activity-based programmes designed to meet young people's identified needs (eg aggression, anger management and self esteem) **22points**
- An intensive' wrap around service, drawing in outside agencies for specific pieces of work (eg substance misuse or mental health issues and to stabilise behaviour) **21points**
- A multi-disciplinary approach using in-house and contracted practitioners for addressing specific needs identified by the care plan (eg work of self esteem, life story work, therapeutic input) **17 points**
- Links between fostering and residential services which will facilitate two way transition for support and respite **12 points**
- Flexible levels of staffing allowing for one to one or two to one staff/young person ratio where assessed as necessary. **8 points**

## **Conclusion**

The responses we received were disappointing from both Social Workers and Professionals and part of this was clearly that people felt they were not experienced enough to comment on the questions being asked of them. This was the response given by several people who did not take part and of some who did, failed to complete it fully as they felt they were unsure how to answer. This is possibly worrying as many people do not see their job as linking to that of Residential Services.

Most of the respondents had positive things to say about the care, stability and support given to young people when in Residential care. They feel the staff are supportive, "very dedicated and always try to get the best for all the young people". Those who did feel more negatively, usually said this was due to the mix of young people or lack of resources, rather than to the staff themselves. Some of the most positive comments came from the partnership working and good communication professionals felt they had with them homes.

Whilst most people felt happy to comment on what they thought of the levels of care or what the homes did well / could do better, many people obviously felt it very difficult to look to how things should change in the future. This is evidenced by the far fewer responses from these questions.

On the whole people seem to feel the homes are doing a good job and while many feel they cannot see why things should really change, others feel more specialised training, increased resources, 1:1 support at the homes and a more rural settings would be beneficial.

## **Residential Review : Professionals & Social Worker Feedback**

### **Data**

Numbers with **SW** next to them were only asked of Stakeholder Social Workers.

#### **1. What is your professional role?**

**We received responses from 11 Stakeholder Social Workers and 11 Professionals.**

- Acting Principle Educational Psychologist
- Assisntant Head teacher (Inclusion)
- Early Years Advisor
- Fostering Recruitment Project Manager
- Head Teacher x 2
- Independent Reviewing Officer
- Looked After Team Manager
- Police SGT
- Probation Officer
- Senior Practitioner Bridgend Foster Care
- Social Worker x 5
- Supervising Social Worker
- Teacher
- Youth Justice Worker
- Team manager x 3

#### **2. Have you worked with a child / children in Pant Morfa, Maesteg or Cartrefle community homes in the last (3) years?**

Yes 15      No 6      No answer 1

#### **3. Have you visited any of the homes?**

Yes 20      No 2

**If so, which one/s?**

**Pant Morfa 12**  
**Cartrefle 12**  
**Maesteg 9**

4. (a) Residential services are inspected regularly and have to produce a Statement of Purpose, an Inspection Report and Annual Reports. Are you aware of any of these documents and have you read them?

Yes 12      No 9      Unaware of documents 1

If yes, please state which ones:

- all of them
- Am aware of Inspections, SOP & other documents but have not read them for residential services.
- Aware but have not read any
- Aware of documents but have not read them
- But I haven't read any
- Cartrefle
- I am aware but have not seen them recently
- I am aware of the documents but have not seen them.
- Maesteg Community Home
- Not read them
- Statement of purpose

**SW(b)** Did they assist your understanding of what the home provides in order to make an appropriate decision on the placement match?

Yes 4                      No 3                      Unaware 3

**SW** Please give reasons:

- Already knew the details
- N/A
- Provided further clarity however, I had a fuller and more practical guide from meeting with each of the managers as part of my induction. I also met with staff regularly when not visiting the young people in order to understand more fully my role / their role in order to provide the best service for young people and to avoid duplication and to avoid missing key tasks needed
- The statement of purpose confirmed that the placement would provide support and guidance to assist the young person to develop their skills for living independently

5. Did the placement benefit the child/ children you were involved with?

Yes 13      No 3      N/A 5

Please give reasons:

- A placement was unable to be identified for the young person, therefore had to stay in Pant Morfa for the weekend.
- Both placements provided the young people with a period of stability that enabled

them to become involved in longer term planning

- Brought stability, boundaries and a sense of purpose and direction to their lives.
- Cartrefle undertake an independent programme that is excellent. Maesteg met the needs of the yp that I worked with who was also preparing to leave care.
- Kept the child safe
- On 1 occasion I specifically requested a residential placement for one of the young people I was working with as she struggled to cope with living in an alternative family. I was aware of research at the time that supported the concept of residential care for some young people from dysfunctional families and this influenced care planning. For another person the holistic support to prepare her for independence was excellent and could not have been replicated in the community or in a foster placement due to her specific needs / personality. I have noticed over the years young people have tended to 'touch base' with the residential unit which has been valuable. On one occasion I recall a young person was 'faltering' and needed some additional support / outreach. An agreement was given for this to be provided by the residential unit. It was an excellent, needs led response to a vulnerable young person and was extremely effective.
- Pant Morfa were able to provide the young person with the care and security the young person needed at that stage of her development. Cartrefle are providing the young person with the motivation, guidance and support needed to develop skills for moving to independence.
- Planned & emergency placements.
- Provided much needed stability & safe environment.
- Provided stable accommodation with support from staff at times where this support was important to the young person
- Short term whilst issue addressed with family and young person.
- Social Services should have placed the young person in a family foster home. She met up with young people who were far more street wise than herself.
- stable accommodation, support, care
- Too broad
- Young person was mixing with more able young people and getting into trouble. Mix of others at home was far from ideal for young person

**6. Have you attended a planning meeting or review and did you find this useful in planning for the child/young person's future needs?**

**Yes      17      No      1      N/A      4**

**Please give reasons:**

- A planning meeting sets out what is needed for the young person, and who will undertake this role. Reviews help to measure what has been achieved, what is still outstanding and what else is needed.
- Able to identify problems that may occur and strategies to deal with them if they arise
- As part of my normal role.
- Enabled a more comprehensive picture of child's progress to be obtained.
- I have attended a planning meeting, however, I support foster carers

- I have chaired meetings that have taken account of both the young person and family / professional views
- Planning meetings provide a good opportunity for all the relevant professionals / family members and young people to state their views and plan for best support
- Regular LAC reviews are undertaken to review care plan. A planning meeting was held to coordinate and plan for a future change of placement and the transfer of a young person from Pant Morfa to Cartrefle
- The child's welfare was clearly at the top of the agenda
- The staff see the young people every day and know their mood problems and any other issues that they might have.
- These meetings give the opportunity for everyone involved to be updated and discuss the young person's progress.
- Very useful. Maesteg community home were extremely efficient and realistic
- Working with other professionals

## 7. **SW** Was it the first choice of placement

If yes, please say why:

- On one occasion yes, but on all others the young people were already in placement and all needs were being met by the providers so there was no need to change or reconsider the placement suitability.
- Some young people have been reluctant to be part of a family
- Sometimes - I have responsibility for most of the children placed in residential, so am looking at a number of children.

If no, please say what was the first choice and why?

- A foster placement was the first choice but this experienced a breakdown and the young person expressed a preference for a placement in a children's home.
- A fostering placement was unable to be identified, therefore the young person had to be placed at Pant Morfa for the weekend
- Foster Placement but due to the children's behaviour could not match.
- N/A
- No foster placement would have been the first choice

## 8. Was the setting suitable for the young person(s) you were involved with?

Stakeholder SW	Yes	7	No	1	N/A	3
Professionals	Yes	5	No	2	N/A	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>6</b>

Please give reasons:

- depends
- Good well run facilities
- Kept them safe

- Purely because this type of accommodation was not suitable for this young person
- stable accommodation, support, care
- Staff provide good support however sometimes the mix of young people in the homes can be problematic
- A fostering placement would have been more suitable but for the young person, however, Pant Morfa was welcoming, homely and friendly
- As answered previously
- Mix of other young people was not ideal
- The young person benefitted from a placement which provided care, security & stability offered by staff also able to manage some challenging behaviour.
- Was like being at home

**9. Did you feel that the residential service worked in partnership with you?**

**Yes 17 No 0 N/A 4**

**Please give reasons:**

- Excellent liaison with
- I have found Cartrefle in particular maintain close communication with me as case manager
- Mainly involved with children's services
- One unit worked particularly well in offering day care support to a young person in foster care in order to support the emergency provision by a respite foster carer.
- Reminded the young person of all appointments and encourage them to attend.
- Residential staff were excellent in welcoming and settling the young person.
- sometimes
- There is always good communication between community home staff and myself.
- There is regular contact through visits, telephone discussions and reports.
- We always work very closely with all the children's homes where children live, who attend our school, when necessary contacting on a daily basis.
- Yes very much so. I do feel however there is a lack of understanding by residential and field work staff of each others roles, skills and responsibilities. This leads I feel to an uneven distribution of the work in relation to the young persons care and can mean needs are not met. Although from experience and observation residential staff 'fill the gaps' to ensure the young person has the best possible service. When I was a newly qualified worker I heard anecdotal and negative comments about residential units so made a point of finding out for myself. I also organised in my first years to spend 2 days in Pant Morfa to widen my understanding how they operate, the atmosphere and how the young people responded / interacted. I had a reciprocal arrangement with the then manager / supervisor who spent a day accompanying me on fieldwork visits.
- young person was made aware



10. Please look at the following list and indicate which services / needs you think that residential care provides or meets?

	Yes	No	Don't Know
• Meeting physical needs 3		17	0
• Developing self care skills 1	19	0	
• Enhancing social skills 2	18	0	
• Promoting emotional wellbeing 0		19	1
• Preparing for independence 0	20	0	
• Managing behaviour 0	19	1	
• Reducing offending 6	10	4	
• Support through criminal justice system 3	17	0	
• Reducing AWA/missing 6		12	2
• Promoting school/training attendance 0		20	0
• Supporting educational/vocational attainment 2	18	0	
• Supporting to access to health services 0	20	0	
• Information sharing and communication 0	20	0	
• Partnership working with education/ 0 social workers/health etc		20	0
• Providing keyworking (formally link-working) 1		18	1
• Counselling and advising around drugs/ 7 alcohol/ sex education	12	1	
• Direct work with families 7	11	2	
• Supporting planning/review arrangements 0		19	1
• Advocacy 3	9	1	

**11. Residential Services are actually involved in providing/meeting all of the above listed services / needs. Bearing this in mind, please tell us what you feel the service does well and why this is:**

- All the areas I have ticked I have experience of the units providing and doing so well. The ones I have said I don't know to, are ones where I have had no experience.
- As link was more than 3 years ago cannot answer any further questions
- Difficult to assess as involvement through children's services and therefore little contact with service
- I am aware they provide / meet all the above but am unable to comment upon the quality of the outcomes in respect of Bridgend Residential services at this time due to being 4 months in post and having not visited residential services.
- I could only reflect on impact on individuals. They could meet all of them or none to various degrees depending on the individual
- I feel Cartrefle do an excellent programme of independence for young people leaving care. The success of this does depend on the young person wanting to engage.
- I feel that it offers a safe environment for young people and can be nurturing if young person is clear about reasons for being there. Good arena for pro social modelling etc
- In my experience all 3 care homes are very good at information sharing.
- Linking with the school excellent.
- Pant Morfa were effective at meeting physical needs; promoting emotional well being; promoting school/training attendance; supporting access to health services; information sharing and communication; partnership working with education, social workers & health; providing key working. Advising around drugs / alcohol / sex education.  
Cartrefle: The young person has been living there for a relatively short period of time, ( 2 months). They appear to be developing self care skills; promoting emotional well being; preparing for independence; supporting access to health services; information sharing and communication; partnership working with education, social workers and health; providing keyworking. Advising around drugs / alcohol / sex education.
- Promoting a holistic service for a child placed with them and providing them with a range of carers whilst maintaining a regular field of carers. As I perceive many of the children currently placed in residential home to be older they often do not want a substitute parents or family.
- Service makes every attempt to meet the needs of individual children and also communicates very well with our school. The homes are very well run with very dedicated people working there. Partnerships between school and homes are excellent.
- Staff maintain good links with professionals and promote positive eg - education participation in clubs etc. Also work well with families
- Strong links to S/W and therefore effective planning.

**12. Do you consider the current staffing levels of Pant Morfa / Maesteg / Cartrefle are:**

**Inadequate 3**

**Adequate 10**

**Good 0**

**D/K 5**

**13. Do you consider current residential staff training/skills mix is:**

**Inadequate 0  
D/K 3**

**Adequate 4 Good 9**

**Excellent 0**

**Please give reasons for your answer:**

- However I do feel additional training is needed for staff in order to meet the needs of young people affected by adoption. Either those with a child or sibling who has or is being adopted or for those who have had an adoption disruption. I think that residential staff have a unique opportunity to help those young people motioned above to deal in a non - confronting way with issues of loss via adoption.
- I attend training with residential staff and am aware that training is provided however, unable to comment on all staff.
- I do not know
- no comment
- Residential staff are encouraged to attend training events but I am unsure of how much specialised training is offered to residential staff.
- Some staff are much more experienced than others
- Sometimes only one member of staff can be present in an afternoon which can cause problems when support is required
- Staff often seem to have different strengths but complement each other well as a team.
- They are restricted from being able to provide sufficient 1:1 and aftercare due to staffing levels.
- unable to answer
- Wide mix of experience and qualities in the staff group which enables responses to young people to be appropriate and timely.

**14. Please tell us what areas you feel need to be improved and why?**

- Access to more specialist support / guidance in a timely manner as the need or situation dictates.
- As stated above I feel more training around adoption / life journey work etc would be an asset.
- Continued assessment of appropriateness of the placement for the young person taking into account mix with other young people.
- I would like to see more independent living flats like the one they have in Cartrefle.
- More resources at specified times in terms of staffing.
- More staffing and greater role with education for young people who struggle with mainstream attendance.
- My pupil was placed in Maesteg Residential home even though it was felt that this was the wrong decision
- Need to work jointly with education to ensure a seamless front to manage children together.
- Priority should be given to training new staff in strategies for managing challenging behaviour. Residential staff may also benefit from developing their understanding of the challenging role of social workers and ensure they do not undermine the social workers relationship with the child /young person.

- Some homes look a bit dated in décor etc & lack the "homely" feel.
- Staff need to be helped to remain fresh & receptive to new ideas. It is so easy to not try some approaches if they have previously failed.
- ?
- Unable to comment

**15. How would you gauge the overall quality of the services provided?**

Poor 0 3	Adequate 1	Average 1	Good 12	Excellent
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**16. To assist residential services in the achievement of best outcomes for children and young people, services need to work in partnership. What arrangements would strengthen support for children in residential care?**

- Accelerated / enhanced links to CAMHS and education provision if needed.
- attend LAC reviews
- Closer links with fostering and supported lodgings provision to identify suitable foster placements for children in residential at earlier stage.
- Continuity, good parenting skill, enthusiasm for the same outcomes
- I consider the partnerships to be very effective at present
- I know the young people I worked with benefitted from both the preparation for independence and the outreach service. In all cases this was provided by the residential staff and was over and above what was expected of them. I feel more resources are needed to strengthen the outreach aspect for care leavers.
- I think residential service do all they can for young people
- Joint work / discussion with social worker and child. More joint work and residential staff to be kept up to date with info.
- More capacity within childcare teams so they were better able to support young people in residential provision.
- More chronic and new clients entering the home - but as a strategy resource this can be difficult.
- More resources / options for young people to move on so that they can be given some choice rather than wait for situations to be crisis led.
- Regular communication between agencies. Young person involved in meetings etc
- Social workers need to listen to and liase with all the significant people in the child's life when developing a care plan.
- Social Workers time being freed up from doing work on the computers and more face to face work as was recommended by Lord Lamming after the Climbie enquiry.
- Strong links and ready access to: a) CAMHS, b) one to one educational support, c) specialist support eg substance misuse, d) dedicated out reach worker to support move to independence, e) fostering so that when appropriate a move to or from a foster home is achievable with minimum disruption. Alternatively, a - c to be based in the provision.
- That all the relevant agencies spend time with the young person and their family and provide explanations for decision making and clear goals.

- The young people I have worked with sometimes express a lack of understanding about why they are in care.
- Very good support already in place.

### **What could your agency do to support this?**

- Attend meetings and be part of the planning process
- Children need individual responses some of the questions could be about B&Q or any other agency.
- Encourage child's social worker to do more joint work and share more info.
- Ensure workloads reflect the amount of time that is required to spend with family members, children / young people / staff in residential homes.
- I work for SSD which is having to balance resources through children's services.
- Meeting with residential managers re placement.
- More admin support for social workers
- N/A
- Offer advice and support. Keep other agencies informed of work undertaken
- Pupils correct educational provision could be identified and acted upon earlier so that they are placed in the most appropriate provision according to their needs.
- Regular liaison with core staff. Ensuring time spent with young person and family. Engage in planning meeting inclusive of the young person and their family.
- Support regular meetings between young person, staff and other agencies. Regular liaison with staff at the residential establishments.
- The adoption service has limited involvement, but it is one area where we would like to strengthen our input. I have already suggested (and had it agreed), to run a life journey work training event in Cartrefle in March 09. It would be helpful if I could allocate a named worker to each of the units in order to offer a specific point of call for the managers and staff to approach in respect of adoption disruptions, contact, loss and twin tracking etc.
- To consider in more depth placement and mix of children.
- Work closely with one or two identified foster carers to ensure that the provision is available
- YOS works with staff at community homes regarding young people & education, accommodation

### **What can other agencies do?**

- ?
- As above
- Continue to attend LAC reviews
- D/K
- Devise a support strategy that fast tracks referrals from children and young people placed in residential homes.
- Ensure response times are timely and given priority.
- Ensure their agency understand the role of the home and social worker and develop strategies for effective communication and partnership working.

- It is important that everyone has a clear understanding of what resources are available within the community and how they can be accessed.
- Multi agency meetings should have a time identified limit in which their recommendations must be acted upon
- Regular communications, (social services)
- same
- Schools could offer better support to young people in residential care.

**17. Which young people should residential placements be provided for in the future, with regard to their:**

**Age:**

- 10+ I feel no child under the age of 10 should be in residential care.
- 10-18 years. Mother and baby assessment provision - with foster family linked. Available for 2 - 3 mothers under 18yrs.
- 13 plus
- Adolescents. Matching considerations also need to be considered.
- current
- Depends on the child's previous experiences and assessed needs.
- I think that they are correct at the moment.
- Secondary age children / young people
- There should not be significant age gaps between young people in placement
- Unable to answer

**Needs:**

- A child requiring high levels of supervision & structure in an environment that provides increased motivation and opportunities to participate in activities. Possibly the child will require therapeutic input.
- Challenging behaviour, substance misuse, educational difficulties, low self esteem. Young people who abscond - if more rural setting developed
- current
- Emotional, severe neglect or abusive backgrounds
- Especially those whose safety etc is an issue
- Flexibility of services particularly during evenings and at weekends.
- Poor level of attachment / challenging confusing behaviours
- Promoting independent living, mother & baby placements, time limited assessments
- Those who require a stable and secure environment with support

**Behaviour:**

- Absconding etc
- As above
- Children who have experienced foster care breakdowns because their carers have been unable to meet their needs or those who have experienced traumatic

family dysfunction and express a wish not to be placed with another family.

- current
- Drugs and criminal behaviour
- Due to staff mix and ratio / training they are able to cope with more extremes of behaviour even if they are over prolonged periods of time that carers within their own home environment may not be able to manage.
- It is important that all establishments maintain stability within their client group to prevent them becoming "sin bins"
- This clearly depends on the mix of young people and how disruptive the behaviour is - i.e. would a single placement be more suitable.

**18. Are the homes currently in the right location?**

**Yes 11 No 2 D/K 2**

**If no, where do you think they should be, e.g. in the centre of Bridgend communities or in more rural areas within the County?**

- I am not aware of any problems and think it is good to have areas of different geographical location as some young people may not wish to be right in the centre of Bridgend.
- More specialised residential units catering for the needs of children / young people with a history of absconding / offending behaviour should be available in a more rural setting within the county.
- Possibly one home to be in more rural setting
- This would depend on the needs of the young people

**19. The following is a list of some Residential models. Thinking of the young people you are currently working with, please rank which 3 you feel Bridgend needs to develop, (3 being the most important).**

- **Links between fostering and residential services which will facilitate two way transition for support and respite** 12
- **A multi-disciplinary approach using in-house and contracted practitioners for addressing specific needs identified by the care plan (e.g. work of self esteem, life story work, therapeutic input)** 17
- **An intensive' wrap around service, drawing in outside agencies for specific pieces of work (e.g. substance misuse or mental health issues and to stabilise behaviour)** 21
- **Flexible levels of staffing allowing for one to one or two to one staff/young person ratio where assessed as necessary.** 8
- **Individual activity-based programmes designed to meet young people's identified needs (e.g. aggression, anger management and self esteem)** 22
- **Independent living with intensive/task focused work with input from careers, social housing and benefits agency.** 28
- **Other** 0 Please state:  
\_\_\_\_\_

## **20. Is there anything else you wish to comment on?**

- I do not feel that I was the best placed for consultation. Little involvement other than through children's services, who are probably better placed. Apologies.
- I enjoy working with the staff in the 3 care homes. I find them very dedicated and always try to get the best for all the young people.
- I have not provided answers to all the questions due to the nature of my employment but hope that the limited info provided will be of assistance.
- N/A
- Primarily I feel the focus should be on the provision of a "home", which ideally should mirror positive aspects of a private home.
- Residential homes are often able to provide a placement for a child who is not appropriate to be placed into a family environment either due to their own wishes or their behaviours and risks that they may pose to others.
- There appears to be a need for a unit (in house) that could provide more intensive activity based programmes for young people demonstrating very challenging behaviours. We are currently placing children / young people in expensive private out of county residential placements.
- This questionnaire is poorly written and subjective responses are required. Need to look at best outcomes and whether they are being achieved.
- Unable to comment on some questions as am not currently working with child or young person placed in residential provision.



**Analysis and summary comments**  
**of Residential staff Consultation day 12/02/09**

**Why do children enter residential care, both 'in house' and 'out of authority' and not other settings?**

Attachment issues child/young person unable to function on a one to one

basis

family environment not suitable

another family can mean feelings of disloyalty to birth

family

foster family is ready made & young person can feel like

an outsider

Staffing provision Staff available 24/7 to meet needs of young people

young people have previously been let down by adults

lack of trust – choice of a number of potential staff to

relate to

variety of staff skills, ages & backgrounds

staff can walk away at end of shift

residential establishment is not staff members' own home

therefore young person feels less uncomfortable

Residential can be seen as a follow on to an unsuccessful fostering provision as a result of

Behaviour

behaviour cannot be tolerated /managed and redirected with family/extended family or foster family.

settle into life with other young people and conform with other young people around

e.g.. substance misuse/aggression/sexualised/withdrawn/  
not able to engage are easier to manage with a staff team

Why out of the authority

young person cannot cope in a group setting, needs 1:1

young person may need to be away from home locality

for period of time

therapeutic services may be more readily available

greater staff ratio provided in some settings

young person may need confines if they abscond a great

deal a rural setting may be more suitable

very specialised needs of young person i.e. disability,

mental health needs

**Look at how residential care enriches the lives of children and young people and promotes positive outcomes.**

**Strengths**

Boundaries and Routine

develop life skills

see other young people having boundaries

set and receiving rewards

Security –

reduces anxiety

feel safe

make own choices

can have time out

can take what they want out of residential

care

no stigma as result of behaviour

Relationship building

self esteem and confidence

sense of identity – can be an individual

learn to trust adults  
learn to live with adults  
enable them to have a voice  
adults who will listen

Continuity of care & stability      builds on young person's positives  
empowers and motivates young person  
can continue to provide support post leaving

Diversity of experience      introduced to community activities  
can become part of a community

Access to services      regular health checks  
support stage by stage  
regular education  
specialist supports  
supportive involvement with their families

### **Challenges & how we could further develop its strengths**

Group living      different dynamics  
resisting peer pressure  
establishing a daily routine eg getting up for  
school      one young person can motivate another

Resource limitations.      accessing specialist services eg. Child &  
Adolescent Mental Health Service.  
need for a more rapid access to specialist  
services  
waiting lists for services are lengthy

	<p>overcoming young people's lack of attendance at appointments  lower staff ratio especially at week ends</p>
Education-	<p>for older age groups difficulties in accessing other sources of education/employment/training  Impact of seeing other young people not attending  working with those who have a non school attendance pattern  children</p>
Behaviour	<p>undoing some learnt behaviour  challenging young people's expectations around</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• their understanding and acceptance of boundaries</li> <li>• diet</li> <li>• young people who have acted as adults but are children</li> <li>• establishing boundaries sometimes for first time (back to basics)</li> </ul>
Staffing	<p>inconsistency in staff group occasionally balancing multiple carers to ensure no unknown manipulation  morale of staff, (don't always feel valued, undermined by lack of training)  lack of understanding of role of residential care staff by others  limited opportunity to promote themselves and residential care  staff isolated from social work colleagues  18.5hr contracts [annualised hours] don't work (this affects the key working role as the y young person may not see their key worker up to for 8 days)</p> <p>enable staff to undertake secondments to other services</p> <p>lots of resources/skills within staff teams not being fully utilised</p>

challenge of becoming complacent  
question the relevance of some of the training  
cover problems when staff on training  
continuity of staff

Parents

difficult to unlearn behaviour if their messages are in conflict  
parents can be entrenched  
viewed as on a pedestal by the young person

Post 16 Support

community pressures  
inappropriate placements can impact on work with other young people  
matching with existing young people in placement is not always appropriate  
sometimes seen as last resort for young person  
some times there is poor decision making

### **How to develop its strengths**

Monitor performance through:

- staff meetings
- discussions with manager
- monthly reports
- key worker observations
- observing changes in behaviour
- parents involvement in monthly reports

Provide more time to reflect on issues outside of team meeting

Set targets that are relevant to young people eg getting up on time, getting to school/training

Provide opportunities for secondments to staff in other services and placements for social worker trainees during their training within residential settings

Provide opportunities for secondment for residential staff to other departments e.g. EDT, child care teams to broaden career development and skills.

Provide more relevant IT training

Enable other professionals to work within residential establishments unit including foster carers

Develop preventative measures such as mediation work in which residential staff can actively participate

Provide ready access to professionals/use of strategies to give reassurance to residential staff about actions they may take in relation to young people's behaviour

Develop outreach work and links with families in the community

Develop use physical resources within Bridgend – the self contained flat in one of the homes is under used on occasions, make use of buildings to provide services, when the children are at school the unit should be used to its full extent, e.g community resource, conference facilities etc.

Consider whether a 'mother and baby' resource could be made available in flat

Provide educational facilities on site – utilising existing staff skills or having a teacher attached to the units

**Thinking about the needs of the children and young people that we identified earlier, and how residential care can meet those needs, design a service for Bridgend that will optimise the outcomes for those identified as needing residential provision.**

### Models

- 1 More integrated provision for older children and young people closely associated with development of independent living skills, education training and employment. More monitoring / hands on. Staff to be more involved with After Care, keeping in touch with young person and building bridges. Specialised staff in the unit to assist with moving on. Independent living expand and cater for six or more.

Suggestions identified:

- Need to provide a scheme within Bridgend C.B.C to enable young people to have work experience.or training opportunities, utilise existing services for this purpose. Schools struggle to get work experience placements
- Instead of referring out/ waiting for services – Bridgend C.B.C. provides service in house- eg mediation, education, counsellors, Specialised intense work with young people, Specialised psychiatric help. Multi agency provision – share resource across Bridgend C.B.C.residential provision

- Liaison and support to foster carers- respite provision when placements under strain or at risk of breakdown
  - Provide a discreet through service – meeting diverse needs – how do you cater for them all. All week in one unit then perhaps a weekend in another.
  - Transition services
- 2 Respite –. Service aimed at young people in need but who have not necessarily been looked after. Preventative provision to assist children and young people being admitted to care with an emphasis on keeping families together, but with the provision of overnight respite.

Suggestions identified:

- Twenty four hour staff. Waking night shift – always someone on hand. Or one asleep and one awake.
- Emergency facility.
- Preventative work at house linked with ISS(Family support) – a respite centre providing parenting skills
- Could be used with foster carers to prevent breakdown
- Offer an alternative educational curriculum
- Make arrangements for placement swaps with another local authority/agency in different homes and different areas. Eg. Maesteg.- Chepstow
- Provide reward systems e.g. young people earn vouchers up to £5 for engaging with professionals or other age appropriate rewards
- Reframe use of the units/resources - open facilities to the community when the young people are not in the unit Monday to Friday 9-3.30pm for example parenting programmes or other activities could be provided
- Units could cater for activities for a range of ages within one unit as long as this was planned e.g. 8-11 year olds Mon-Wed and older ones later in the week, or could have 2 units to cater for specific age groups
- Family group conferencing - make use of the respite provision during the day
- Could have staff who are not unit based but multi-disciplinary eg family support, going in during the mornings

- Staff could move between provisions
- 3 Parent and baby provision- redesign a unit to provide a residential resource in house

### **Key points**

Still need residential homes

Any respite provision must be separate to the longer term residential units

Location of units needs to be considered both urban and rural

Diana Nyomtato  
18/5/09



## RESIDENTIAL REVIEW

Presentation made to  
Residential Staff Consultation  
Workshop  
12<sup>th</sup> February 2009

### Context

- Creative Exchanges Report
  - LAC numbers high
  - Over provision of residential places
  - Lack of investment in fostering
  
- Areas of focus
  - Do we have the right number of children /young people accommodated
  - Are we doing enough to prevent young people coming in to the system
  - Are we putting the right services in to support the young people to return home
  - Are we providing permanence for those young people unable to return home

- A number of projects established
  - LAC Project
  - Adoption Project
  - Fostering Recruitment Project
  - Family Support Strategy
  - Quality Assurance
  - ICS
  - Commissioning Strategy
  - Residential Review
  - Reduction of the overall LAC numbers
  - Increase in the number of discharges

- Supporting Vulnerable Children Programme
  - 4 projects
    - LAC
    - ICS
    - Quality Assurance
    - Residential Review

– Residential Review Project set up in August 2008

- Project team established
- Project plan developed and work streams identified
  - Case File analysis of 36 cases
  - Evaluation of current research and models
  - Analysis of inspection reports, statements of purpose and annual reports
  - Analysis of Regulation 32 reports
  - Analysis of end of placement reports

Workstreams continued

- Consultation-questionnaires/interviews with young people, parents/carers, stakeholders
- Analysis of Staff profiles-experience and skill mix
- Evaluate all information to include in final report

## Cost of Residential Care

November 2008

## Out of County Residential Care

- 14 Placements
- Estimated gross expenditure 2008/09 - £2,020,440
- Average full-year cost per placement - £156,633

£286,786



£156,633



£46,182



# Independent Fostering Agencies

- 74 Placements
- Estimated gross expenditure 2008/09 - £2,759,572
- Average full-year cost per placement - £41,659

£91,105



£41,659



£23,529



# Community Homes

- 3 Community Homes - 14 beds
- Estimated gross expenditure 2008/09 - £1,006,700
- Average full-year cost per placement - £71,907

£81,757



£71,907



£67,992



# Fostering

- 120+ places
- Estimated gross expenditure 2008/09 - £1,552,291
- Average full-year cost per placement - £17,750

£28,500



£22,000



£10,880



# Resolutions

- 17 current places
- Estimated gross expenditure 2008/09 - £685,000
- Full-year cost per placement - £47,537
- (carers are paid whether with a placement or vacant)
- If capacity increased to target, cost would be £36,850

£47,537  
Currently



£36,850  
potential



## Budgets are creaking...

Service	Budget	Projection	Variance
OOC	1,314,990	1,328,520	13,530
IFA	1,788,100	2,631,818	843,718
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>3,103,090</b>	<b>3,960,338</b>	<b>857,248</b>
Homes	923,812	1,006,700	82,888
Fostering	2,239,150	1,552,291	(686,859)
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>3,162,962</b>	<b>2,558,991</b>	<b>(603,971)</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6,266,052</b>	<b>6,519,329</b>	<b>253,277</b>



## Relative costs

Reducing cost per placement

OOC Residential  
£156,633

Community Home  
£71,907

Resolutions  
£47,537

IFA  
£41,659

Fostering  
£22,000



# To put it another way...

IFA

1x



= 2x

Fostering places



# Or...

Community Home

1x



= 4x

IFA places



AND



Plus

Preventative Services





# Or maybe....

OOC specialist

1x



= 2x

Community Home places



OR

9x



Fostering places

## **An analysis of research available on models of practice and issues arising related to residential provision, within the UK.**

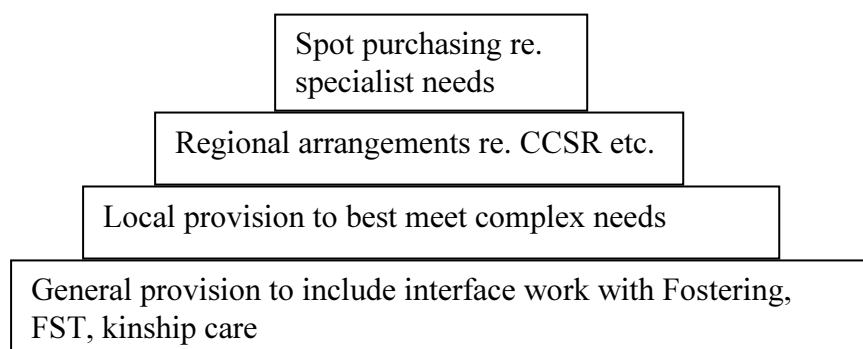
### **Market demand and supply**

Research examining the optimum supply of beds within any authority, suggests that market segmentation, commissioning and good practice should be used to “manage the market”. (1)

Statistical analysis suggests that as we move closer to the child’s home authority then the probability of meeting every specific need within a residential unit lowers. (1) Where the chances of meeting every child’s needs are increased by increasing the size of the commissioning pool. So that locally there may be a certain number of units to meet the locally agreed needs of the majority of children, regionally we might work with others to meet the needs of a minority of children, and nationally we may have to purchase specialist provision for a child with a very specific set of needs which are not generally seen in the area.

This simple analysis suggests that the local needs analysis of the Borough should identify the mainstream needs of residential units, with less common needs met by regional arrangements and spot purchasing arrangements to meet highly specialist needs of individual children. (1)

It also suggests that within the residential review we should examine the current use of regional or national purchasing arrangements and see whether we can more effectively meet the needs of these children within the Borough.



Specialist and custodial sentences are identified in research literature as the two more likely reasons for residence outside an Authority’s residential units. (2) However research also suggests that the long term effects of both forms of accommodation on children can be devastating to the child’s emotional health and to the Borough’s resources. (2) Suggesting that the use of out of Authority care must be used in the minority of cases in a clearly planned intervention.

“Voices from care” research stated clearly that contact with family members including extended family and siblings is vital to children’s well-being. (3) National Performance indicators focus upon placements no farther than 20

miles from the child's ordinary place of residence to reduce the impact of such placements in the short and long term.

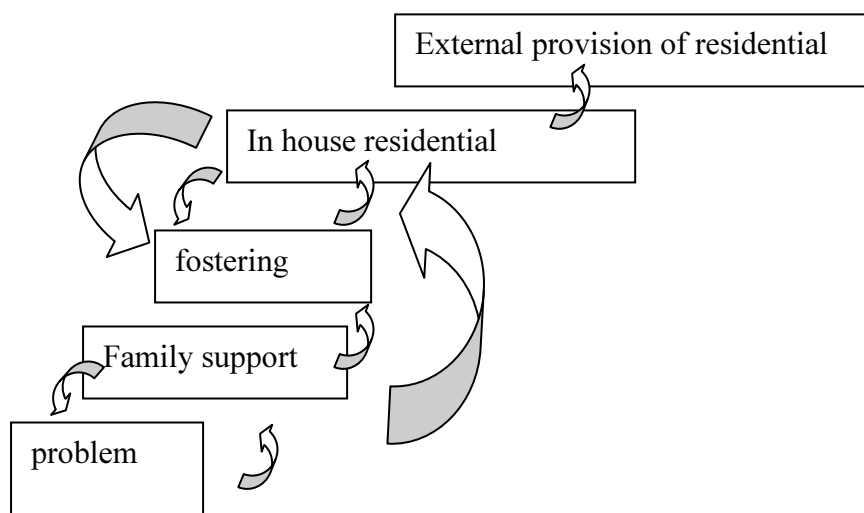
In the long term, out of authority placements which may meet the immediate needs of a child are evidenced now as causing considerable difficulties for some children as they move through transition to adulthood. These placements result in children being placed significant distances away from their extended families and their community.

The leaving care service will retain "host authority" status under the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 and these workers will often lack the local knowledge to effectively support young people through to housing, training and other providers in the area. Standing order 31 and "ordinary residence" rulings re . adult services make multi-agency planning for such placements vital.

To reduce these placements then the Borough could provide increased places within the Authority's boundaries itself. These placements would focus upon more specialist needs (identified elsewhere).

This could be met by development of a specialist provision, a revision of present statements of purpose, and / or a revision of current provision with a renewed focus upon the use of other specialised fostering and family support provision, maintaining children's placement within their own family. Dependant upon a needs analysis which should identify whether the majority of placements require complex needs to be met via "alternative provision " with intensive support, or need residential provision to best meet complex needs.

Research suggests a continuum of care is needed with provision supplied in a flexible " ladder of care", (4) with movements between provision considered as appropriate rather than as a last resort.



Research suggests that residential care should be seen as a positive choice rather than a last resort, with clear assessment and matching of needs. Some children clearly state a preference for the anonymity of group settings, with

the majority of children preferring continuity of a carer, building up attachments which can follow through their care history. (4)

This increases a sense of stability and reduces a sense of failure on the child's part. Such flexibility would demand flexible staffing levels, with appropriate terms and conditions to meet fluctuating demand. Fluctuations should focus upon evening shifts when statistics suggest issues become more difficult. (5)

Staffing issues are also addressed by various "cluster" units using "buddying" support between homes. Such movement of staff can also be seen to reduce the potential building of environments in which staff members become less accountable to outside professionals, and the potential for abuse that has historically developed. (5)

For such flexibility, links between fostering and residential services need to facilitate a two way transition for support and respite. Additionally, family support service provision would need review to facilitate structured intervention which supports such movement.

### **Specialist provision**

**Single units** are used in a significant number of cases across the United Kingdom. However during surveys children consistently state that the lack of interaction with other children and family members can lead to feelings of isolation. (2) Often seen as a positive focus upon the needs of the individual child, they can also be quite oppressive with children finding increasing difficulties as they grow through transition into adulthood, with such a focus upon them by staff members.

The provision is generally for children with extremely specialist needs and could be spot purchased as appropriate. Because of the focus upon the child with undivided attention it tends to be used for crisis intervention, emergency placements, children with special educational needs, and as an alternative to secure provision. (2)

**Dual units** whilst generally allowing more interaction with other children and facilitating staff focus upon children's needs, are subject to similar oppressive outcomes. Generally being used for short periods of time. (2) and for children who cannot function in a group environment – i.e those displaying extreme behaviour and complex needs.

**Group settings** are generally able to deal with mainstream needs. Children have stated that they prefer the anonymity of such units, with the support of independent living skills potentially improved as they move into adulthood with less staff attention ; allowing more risk management and learning from risk taking in a supported environment.

Group dynamics play a significant part in the running of any successful unit, and the manager's control of admissions, with reduced emergency provision (2) was a vital element of group management in all research.

**Location of units** has not been outlined in any great detail. Previously external providers have certainly focussed upon rural and isolated provision. However there is no robust evidence to support such provision and there is a general move to provision close to communities. (2)

### **Revision of current provision**

All models of practice studied deal with complex needs within units. They suggest ways to meet often specialist areas of need can be –

- Multi- agency working around the child – wrap around service
- Multi-agency Looked After panels
- Linking in to specialisms on a surgery basis as well as individual case support.
- Multi-skilled staff mix

### **Multi-agency working around the child.**

Benefits of this system include dividing elements of work into manageable elements. However there are significant issues in such models -

The majority of research studied recognises that the experts in particular children should be listened to, and that they are :

- The child
- The family
- The residential care worker
- The case holder

Generally staff teams within residential units were found to be positive and motivated.

The linking in to agencies outside the unit, viewed as “specialist”, including education welfare officers, mental health workers, substance misuse advisers, was found to undermine staff confidence significantly. (5)

The use of other agencies is also liable to be delayed by waiting lists and other prioritised client groups leaving the child unsupported with staff on hand who feel deskilled or unrecognised in the support they could provide .

Linking in to other agencies will then demand protocols which prioritise children in care. However research suggests that even where such protocols exist other professionals view children in care as a specialism in itself and

often do not offer service to children they think they are ill equipped to support (4)

**Multi-agency Looked After panels** are currently increasing, and with the onset of statutory obligations re. standing order 31 and “ordinary residence” the need for joint planning and joint funding of placements is now vital. Such funding arrangements should include education and the Criminal Justice system.

**E.g YOS** – current discussions include a move away from a distinction between section 20 accommodation and other orders. This would reduce the perverse incentive on Local Authorities to place children in custody as they become the primary responsibility of the criminal justice system. These placements do not offer the support to deal with often longstanding issues arising from family history. Discussions will include a movement of budgets between the agencies to reflect this revised position. (4)

**Linking in to specialisms on a surgery basis as well as individual case support.**

Access to consultation and links to other agencies as advisors was seen as particularly positive, as they were not brought in as the “experts”. (4) The issues related to waiting lists and undermining main carers were thus alleviated.

Such links are being developed with services including the CAMHS service in the Borough. Indeed research suggests that this is an area which any model should focus upon. Recent research has shown that the majority of risk factors for childhood psychiatric disorders coincide with those that result in children being taken into care. (4) Children in care are 4-5 times more likely to struggle with mental health issues than their peers (4). Evidence strongly suggest that, although in theory, children in care are supposed to be given priority access to CAMHS, the enormous pressure being placed on these services combined with the unstable nature of foster placements prevents Looked After children from getting help (4).

Clearly then revised methods of offering mental health support need to be considered within any residential provision.

### **Multi-skilled staff mix**

Generally there are many positives to having staff with specialist skills on site. However “normalisation” efforts also encourage the use of community resources and should be borne in mind as a significant issue for children in care. (6)

No definitive research on models of practice exists for residential care. Qualitative studies prove that residential programs applying behavioural therapeutic methods and focussing on family involvement show the most promising short term outcomes. Very little evidence exist presently in respect

of more long term outcomes (7) However, generally research reveals three strands which models of residential care for children and young people, should consider (4).

1. Place families at the centre of the stage
2. Tackle the root causes of family breakdown
3. Use of the third sector

## **1. Families at the centre**

Current research very clearly states that where there is no history of abuse, there is a lack of residential provision for families. (4)

Complex needs can be addressed by improved coordination and communication between agencies for example, criminal justice service do not focus on circumstances of the whole family, in which domestic violence has occurred, and the use of MARACs has been increasing to address this. Additionally, research indicates that some of the biggest issues that undermine family relationships are dealt with by adult services who need to be more involved in supporting the family as a whole, including children in the household (4).

Nonetheless residential provision for the whole family has borne up to preliminary evaluation and has been found to be effective in reducing high risk behaviours. (4)

Methods of improving the family focus of interventions would also include the use of extended family members, more family oriented environments and family support in the community. This will involve the use of kinship care, fostering and family support.

### **Kinship care**

Settings which result in more children stating that they feel cared for and loved, tend to be within the family network. (8)

Studies have shown that kinship care is not a priority for many Local Authorities who do too little to involve extended family.(4) Whilst within certain families this may prove difficult, including long standing issues re. Violence, sexual abuse, due to intergenerational transmission of abuse, (8) ; the results can be positive and kinship care should be examined as an alternative form of care.

However kinship carers and foster carers both stated that they felt considerably under-supported by Local Authorities and the model would require staff and financial support to maintain long term placements outside residential settings. (4)

### **Specialised fostering**

Would require considerable investment in support to foster care provision, as well as training regarding more specialist requirements. (would need to be reviewed within the fostering service)

### **Root causes of family breakdown**



9 in 10 children are taken into care for preventable reasons, such as family breakdown (4)

A trend has been observed in Australia and the United States of family preservation and reunification. With parenting education and training, family support policies within protective services and facilitation of child & family contact. (8) The in-house Family Support provision is following this model of intervention but requires significant service development.

Family breakdown is examined within the literature as multi-layered with potential solutions at level 1 services through to level 4 provision. The triggers for family breakdown are often well known by individual services long before children are taken into care. Failure tends to result from an insufficient focus on whole family problems, inadequate investment in preventative policies and the ineffective use of the voluntary sector (4)

### **Root causes of family breakdown**

Family breakdown is highlighted as predominantly related to –

- Domestic violence
- Drug and alcohol related addition
- Financial issues

Any model of practice defined within this review would benefit from fostering and family support service reviews including such services (4) as –

- Family haven ( a daycentre with parenting support provision)
- Cooperation between education and children's services in delivering provision not only within residential but family support provision
- Family fostering schemes e.g. "save the family"
- Family service hubs with an enhanced role for health visitors e.g Surestart and " Supportive Families " agenda being driven by the Welsh Assembly.
- An integrated approach to substance misuse, with specialist residential care for families with addiction issues
- Links to the National Parenting schemes
- Relationship education within schools e.g Student Assistance Programme, Counselling programme presently being developed
- The use of credit unions etc. to address major financial issues within families.

Such review should also consider Family Intervention projects (FIPS) which deliver –

- outreach support within family homes on a daily basis
- support in specialist temporary accommodation within the community
- 24 hour support in residential units.

This provision is presently being evaluated by DFES and reports note it can be a very effective model. (9)

### **Use of the voluntary sector**

All service level agreements and linking protocols with external agencies will require review. The links within the Children & young people's framework would need to focus upon commissioning and process development which supports the residential system developed.

Bev Harrison-James  
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